



November 2022 Newsletter

Empowering Sustainable Communities

Save the Date

Election Day is Tuesday! Have you voted yet?

Don't forget that the 2022 Midterm Elections is Tuesday, November 8th. In Pennsylvania, polls are open from 7am until 8pm, and in New York polls are open from 6am until 9pm. Although midterm elections

have historically suffered low turnouts compared to presidential election years, [this year's midterm is poised to boast record breaking turnout](#), following the 2020 election's [decades-high voter turnout of 62.8%](#).



If you haven't had a chance to peruse your ballot, you can find [election information for Pennsylvania here](#) and find [New York information here](#). If you are looking for more candidate information, Radio Catskill collected interviews with candidates for a variety of local races that [you can find here](#). If it's been a hot minute since you last voted and you want to double check your polling place, [find it here](#). And if you are not yet registered to vote, while it is too late to register for this year's general election, you can ride the civic momentum and get your registration rolling [by visiting here](#).

If you have a campaign sign and you are unsure how to dispose of it in a sustainable way, [check out this article](#) addressing the issue after the 2020 election. You can also contact the local campaign headquarters of the [Democratic Party here](#) or the [Republican Party here](#) to see if they are collecting, recycling or repurposing signs and other materials. Remember, elected officials work for the public, and if sustainability or responsible disposal of materials is an important issue for you remind your elected officials and or local party leaders.

SEEDS Seeks Feedback

Solar Workshops for 2023

Question: Who wants to attend a free Do-It-Yourself Solar Workshop in 2023? Your answer will help us ascertain if we should schedule one. Send your level of interest



to kathy@seedsgroup.net. Include your name, phone, and email.

We have held these training sessions for about 8 years. This fall, we did a solar tour instead, touring homesites of workshop graduates who installed their own solar systems.

Thank you for your continued interest in solar energy, sustainable living and the educational opportunities that give SEEDS its name!

Local News

Farm & Chef Huge Success

The 2022 Farm & Chef event held at the Cooperage on October 2 was a culinary conquest and celebratory success! 336 tickets were

sold, and ticket holders enjoyed farm to table small plate delights prepared by chefs from Native Food & Drink, The Settlers Inn, Maximum Zen, Tick Tocks on Terrace, Here & Now Brewing Company, and The Lodge at Woodloch, plus delectable desserts from The Mustard Seed Cafe.

But the delicious food was not the only attraction this year--the pie auction boasted

donations of 23 home made pies spanning a range of ingredients and pallets, plus a raffle of 42 unique gift baskets donated by local businesses. In all, the event hosts SEEDS, Wayne County Grown, and PASA raised about \$8,000 toward their local agriculture and sustainability missions.

If you missed this year's event, [check out the short film](#) by SEEDS Executive Director Olga Trushina that captured the excitement, enjoyment and shots of the incredible eats of the event.



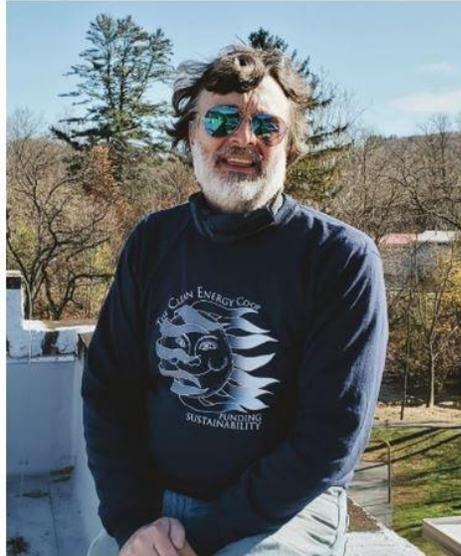
#SEEDSBlog
#DYKw/Jack

Did You Know with Jack Barnett

Winter has again come to Northeast Pennsylvania. Yeah! But also, Ouch! with the announcements by PPL and other utilities for increased prices for

electricity, not to mention nearly everything else too, since energy is so fundamental to our economy.

As of December 1, 2022, PPL's "Price-to-Compare" for both residential and commercial service is more than 14.5cents/kWhr; their [highest prices](#) since PA's electricity market deregulation in 2005. Pennsylvania has always had an energy surplus/exporter and so our electricity prices have nearly always been lower than our neighboring states. No more. Also, other PA utilities-- while also increasing prices-- have not gone as high as PPL and PCLP's. What's going on?



Jack Barnett is a SEEDS Board member, the Food Circle Rep and a Director and Lead for Project Development at the Clean Energy Co-op. Applying his environmental passion and expertise as a retired engineer, Jack is an enthusiastic and involved supporter of solar energy in the Northeast PA region.

First off, I don't know for sure, and probably no one can know for certain, but I have been talking with solar and energy efficiency advocates around PA about this topic. Here's my best understanding:

At the macro level, there's a war going on in Europe, and energy supplies are being used as an economic weapon. US exports of (liquided) natural gas have reached an all-time high, as Europe is paying very high prices for our supply, even with significant additional cost for processing and transportation by ship. Most natural gas exports are leaving from the Gulf states, but this impacts wholesale prices for natural gas everywhere, including in PA where drillers produce lots.

Over the past decade, PA and much of the US has transitioned the majority of its electricity generation from burning coal, which is extremely dirty, with huge carbon/greenhouse gas emissions, to now the majority is produced by burning natural gas, which is less dirty, but still with significant carbon

emissions and methane leakage. PPL's historical pricing (linked above) shows this supply shift to a lower cost fuel has been very good for our local retail electricity prices. For example, PPL's June-November 2020 commercial price at just over 6 cents was its record lowest; and each of the two prior periods was a record low at that time too, so this can't just be attributed to a pandemic effect. A record low to the record high in only 24 months, a 142% increase? BIG OUCH!

One important side note: All the regulated distribution utilities in PA, such as PPL, PCLP, and PECO, are not allowed to themselves own electric generating plants (even solar), and can only mark up their energy purchases by enough to cover their administrative costs for being the default energy supplier within their service territories, i.e., they can't make a profit off their Price-to-Compare electricity sales. Their permissible profits are only from their distribution services, regulated and audited by the PA Public Utility Commission, and transmission assets, regulated by FERC.

So why are other PA utilities' PTC prices not rising as high/fast as PPL and PCLP?

The folks I've spoken to within PECO's territory have suggested that PECO (owned by Exelon) has multiple offset layers of long-term private electricity supply contracts (such as with their non-regulated sister generation companies e.g. nuclear generators), such that only a portion of their electricity purchases are from wholesale market/auctions. Therefore, so far PECO hasn't had the same large cost increases that PPL has had. PPL, and PCLP especially, apparently buy most all of their supply from the short-term wholesale market. If true, it means that PECO's retail prices (and other distribution utilities using similar purchasing strategies) would naturally rise more slowly and maybe not as high. But those prices are also likely to come down more slowly, say after the war in Europe ends and natural gas exports become less attractive.

So why are 3rd-party "green electricity" prices also rising in PA's deregulated retail market (see [PA Power Switch](#))? Plus, they have new federal incentives

to add further capacity, yes? With no fuel costs, shouldn't their prices be stable? You'd think so...but under the surface there are several important things.

First, they're deregulated, so they are motivated to increase prices whenever their customers are still willing to pay. With no or little cost increases, that translates into higher profits. That's capitalism! Some are, of course, also investing in growth and new production and storage facilities, which does cost money. The new incentives are only 4%-14% more (of total cost of a facility) in 2023 than 2021.

I would not be so brave as to predict where electricity prices are going next. In fact, it is hard to say whether energy prices are driving economy-wide inflation or are in fact simply increasing along with general inflation. However, we do know that any work to expand renewable energy production will increase competition and that this (over time) should give consumers cheaper and greener choices.

Do you have an energy question for Jack, members of our Energy Circle, or something one of our SEEDS members might be able to help answer? Education is right there in the SEEDS name, so send us your questions at info@seedsgroup.net and we can share your question and our answer in a future Newsletter and social media.

#SEEDSBlog
#SEEDSGoodNews

Merry & Bright, Sustainable & Local

by Shannon Cilento

The autumn leaves may have only just turned, but 'tis the season to start thinking about that holiday shopping list! While the past two holiday seasons were rife with “pivoting,” online shopping, and Zoom family gatherings, the spirit of the season is alive and well and ready to welcome us back together for beloved holiday festivities and traditions.

Buying your holiday gifts locally not only guarantees getting one-of-a-kind, quality products, but it stimulates the local economy, too. According to American Express, it's estimated that for every dollar spent at a local small business, \$0.67 stays in the business's local community. Additionally, 70% of small businesses say holiday seasonal shopping is their most profitable time of year. Even better, shopping locally reduces your carbon footprint as you forgo consumptive shipping and large-scale manufacturing processes. Fortunately, NEPA is full of opportunities to get out and shop local this season.

After you fill up on Thanksgiving turkey, consider celebrating Small Business Saturday on November 26th. That same weekend, Greater Honesdale Partnership will host their annual Winter Wonderland event. Local businesses will be ready to greet you on Small Business Saturday with special sales opportunities!

If you miss that, you can still experience the holiday season in Honesdale at the Cooperage Project's annual Holiday Artisans' Market from 11am to 4pm on Sunday, December 4th. This market showcases the work of many talented artisans of the Upper Delaware Region. You'll be sure to find a unique selection of handcrafted gifts for friends and family.

In nearby Hawley, the Downtown Hawley Partnership hosts their

annual Winterfest December 9th-11th, with a sleigh full of activities throughout town. The weekend boasts family-friendly activities, craft and vendor fairs, a beer tour, live music, Ritz Holiday Show, a holiday parade, indoor tree and lighting displays, and much more.

If November seems too far away to begin your holiday shopping, our three local farmers' markets also feature artisans and local value-added goods. The Hawley Farmers' Market at the Hawley Hub is on Fridays from 2-5pm, the Main Street Farmers Market at the Cooperage Project is on Saturdays from 11am to 1pm, and the Newfoundland Farmers' Market at the Carlton Drake Memorial Park takes place on Saturdays from 10am until 2pm.

So go forth and fill your reusable shopping bags with local goods and gifts this holiday season. Your community, small business owners, and gift recipients will thank you!



Shannon Cilento is the Outreach Assistant at SEEDS of Northeastern Pennsylvania, whose mission is developing local renewable energy infrastructure and promoting energy efficiency and sustainable living in our region.

For more information or to sign up for the e-newsletter, visit: www.SeedsGroup.net and follow @SEEDSofNEPA on Facebook, Instagram and Youtube for updates!

Do you have an idea for a **#SEEDSBlog** post? if you have experience, expertise or research in an area relevant to sustainable energy, living,

education and or outreach, email us at newsletter@seedsgroup.net and share your idea!

#SEEDSGoodNews

Lloyds Bank, Britain's Largest Domestic Bank, No Longer Lending to New Oil and Gas Projects

[Reuters reported](#) recently that Lloyds, Britain's biggest domestic bank, would no longer support direct financing to develop new oil and gas fields. This announcement made in late October places Lloyds on a short but growing list of financial institutions to push back on funding expansion of the fossil fuel industry.



General view of signage at a branch of Lloyds bank, in London, Britain October 31, 2021. REUTERS/Tom Nicholson

[ClimateChampion](#) further explained Lloyds announcement, "[l]isting the other projects that it would not support moving forwards, Lloyds pointed to 'self-finance' involving upstream oil or gas exploration; development and production in the Arctic region and Antarctic territories; and 'reserve based lending' or 'borrowing based financing for oil and gas companies in the Arctic'."

While Britain is facing the same energy concerns as much of the world, resulting with the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine,

and has recently greenlit exploration in the North Sea, Lloyds announcement shows that public pressure in the face of climate catastrophe gets results. With this late October announcement just ahead of the [UN's Climate Summit](#) in Egypt beginning November 6, Lloyds move sets higher expectations for institutions to take real action towards a climate neutral future, and in the shorter term.

If you are interested in learning more about how organized, grassroots efforts can affect large scale financial institutions on the climate front, visit [Third Act](#), an organization started by climate activist Bill McKibben and read about [their several actions](#), including their [Bank on Our Future Pledge](#). By empowering people through collective action, Third Act is committed to bringing people tangible steps towards a livable climate future for everyone.

#SEEDSGoodNews

Do you have any #SEEDSGoodNews stories to share with the SEEDS community? Send them to us at newsletter@seedsgroup.net or tag us on social media! They can be local stories from your community, or stories from around the world--anything to celebrate and spread the word about the progress of energy efficiency, renewable energy or sustainable living wherever you hear about it!

If you are not a member of SEEDS, please consider joining us today!

You can use this link to share our membership page with others:

<https://seedsgroup.net/become-a-member/>



You will continue to receive our newsletters, invitations to our educational forums and other events. Members are eligible for free solar evaluations, have voting rights at our annual meeting, and help shape our programs and initiatives. For more information visit our website at www.seedsgroup.net.

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