



## Chambers of commerce in Chambersburg, Waynesboro offer plan for members to save on electricity costs

By **MARCUS RAUHUT** Staff writer

Chambers of commerce in Chambersburg and Waynesboro are encouraging members to join electric buying pools to soften the blow of electric deregulation.

Electric customers are bracing for rate hikes as rate caps expire throughout Pennsylvania.

The two local chambers are working with Pittsburgh-based consultant OnDemand Energy Solutions to create a buying pool for non-residential Allegheny Power customers.

OnDemand is alone in offering such a plan in Pennsylvania, but similar pool systems are used to purchase health insurance, office supplies or other services.

Customers joining the pool would still receive bills from Allegheny, but OnDemand would act as a broker to purchase energy in bulk.

OnDemand Vice President John Bodine said because of minimum size requirements, smaller businesses or organizations are not able to shop for electricity on the wholesale market.

Combining smaller and larger customers into a larger pool gives customers better flexibility and purchasing power, he said.

Most electric customers pay rates under state-imposed caps, which are being phased out to move to actual market-based pricing. Rates are not capped by municipal-owned utilities, such as Chambersburg's, or cooperatives, such as Adams Electric Cooperative.

Caps for Allegheny Power customers expire Dec. 31, 2010.

Allegheny Power has been buying its power over a series of auctions to mitigate spikes in energy prices. If prices hold steady from the last auction, small non-residential customers would see a 2.9 percent increase in 2011. Medium-sized non-residential customers would see a 4.9 percent increase.

Rate caps expire at the end of December for PPL Corp. The company announced last month that small businesses that do not shop around can expect to pay 18.4 percent more and large businesses, about 36 percent more.

Bodine said small businesses who joined a pool for PPL customers will not see an increase, while large businesses in the pool will only see a 10 to 15 percent rise in electric bills.

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