



COUNTY OF BERKS, PENNSYLVANIA Office of Agricultural Coordinator

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For Immediate Release

March 15, 2010

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Berks Agricultural Resource Network teams with Greater Reading Chamber for electric cost savings for members

READING ---- Berks County's Agricultural Coordinator Sheila Miller encourages members of the farm community to take advantage of a unique relationship, teaming the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry's (GRCCI) businesses with the county's farms and related agricultural businesses to better manage the cost of electric energy.

"I am pleased that Ellen Horan, president of the Chamber, and her Board have allowed us to be part of their program to leverage our combined purchasing power for electric utilities in the months ahead," said Miller. "We began exploring this opportunity earlier this year with the realization that many of our farmers are already feeling the bite of rate caps coming off, and the rest will feel the impact at the close of 2010." Miller pointed out that those farms served by PPL have already had the caps removed, and those served by Met-Ed will have the caps removed at the end of the year.

Farmers can be part of the Chamber's power pool by joining the Berks Agricultural Resource Network (B.A.R.N.), said Miller. B.A.R.N. is a non-profit organization that serves the Berks County agricultural and related food industries. The organization will be representing the farm community as a member of the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry. American PowerNet is the company that is customizing solutions for each business that is interested in the power pool. According to Gail Landis, vice president of Government & Community Relations for GRCCI, American PowerNet provides a thorough analysis, recommends cost reduction options, and manages the entire process. Each business owner makes the final decision on whether or not to implement an American PowerNet solution, she said.

According to Landis, the electric power industry has changed dramatically in recent years. Today the business of generating electricity is no longer part of the regulated utility. Since passage of state legislation in 1996, numerous companies have entered the electric generation market in Pennsylvania. These companies are called electric generation suppliers or electric wholesale generators. Landis noted that each utility has a different method for determining its new supply tariffs.

The GRCCI used a qualification process to select American PowerNet to manage the process and leverage businesses' purchasing power and access to qualified suppliers. They are an independent consulting firm that will provide information, education and access to competitive pricing so that members can make an informed choice in the electricity market, Landis concluded.

For more information on how to join the Berks Agricultural Resource Network's power pool with the GRCCI, contact Sheila Miller at 610-898-5482 or Gail Landis at 610-376-6766. PPL & Met-Ed or other utility information is due by the end of March for customers interested in enrolling in the Chamber's Power Pool for contracts that will be bid in April.