



# THE RIVERTOWN COALITION FOR CLEAN AIR AND CLEAN WATER



## Renewable Energy

The Rivertown Coalition promotes, salutes, and emphasizes the use of renewable resources, sustainability and clean technologies and the companies that produce and develop these—energy through the use of wind power, hydro, solar thermal, photovoltaic and biomass, producing biofuels, and hydrogen through wind power and

developing uses for these technologies such as electric cars. ACCIONA Energy, whose Technology Center is based in Navarre, Spain, is one such company that has been pioneering renewable energy technologies for more than twenty years. They are a leading manufacturer of wind turbine generators for their own wind farms and

for other customers, understanding the needs of wind farm developers and operators and through their research and development have expanded into several different kinds of renewable energy. They now have a presence in both Canada and the United States.

# A Letter on Common Sense Energy

## By Treasurer Shirley Rowe

Dear Friends,

Hardly a day goes by that I don't think about you and how fortunate all of us are to have so many wonderful friends in our lives and a beautiful world to share together! We have inherited so much and been able to adapt our environment for our comfort, giving us more leisure time, eradicating many devastating illnesses through the advancement of science, machines, and inventions that make our labor easier—well, we are all aware how life today has improved over yester years

Our organization, The Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air and Clean Water, is working hard to educate people about the importance of having clean air and clean water, the two most vital elements for a healthy life, and something that is a concern for all of us. The excellent water our forefathers discovered when coming to the New World is not the same today nor is the air that we breathe.

I was talking to some friends about solar energy, one of the sustainable sources of energy that pollutes neither the air nor the water and is so abundant to us. I talked to Scherry Moore who lives on Renna Drive in Selinsgrove. She is so excited about her investment in solar energy to supply her home with electricity. She said that her solar panels supply her with enough electricity that through a broker, she sells what she doesn't use to PPL. She said she is in a "mini power plant" and is in her third year without an electric bill. She was fortunate to be able to take advantage of the state and federal government's offer to invest in solar energy several years back. In time, when, because of

age, she is no longer able to handle the coal and wood fuels she uses to heat her home, and her initial debt is paid, she will use solar energy also for her heat.

I also talked to Rodney Ries of Selinsgrove, a very environmentally conscious person, and he, too, was enthusiastic about using solar energy to heat water for his home. He said he has more hot water than he can use. His solar panels are set on a timer from sun up to sun down. In the dead of winter, he shuts off the system and resorts to heating his water the same way he heats his house.

Mr. and Mrs. Russell Hummels, now deceased, used solar energy to heat the water for their swimming pool, which I enjoyed using. Sometimes the water was too hot and the system had to be shut down. If you want to extend your pool usage, try solar energy.

Another environmental enthusiast was Charles Kirchner of Selinsgrove. He, too, took advantage of the offer the state and federal government had to invest in solar energy. He uses solar energy totally for water and electricity, and geo-thermal to heat and cool his house. Geo-thermal energy will be discussed in a future newsletter. He mentioned how his electric bill went down considerably from the standard method of receiving electricity.

It was a pleasure talking with these folks, as it is a pleasure for me to tell you about them and the success they are having with using one of the renewable forms of energy.

Shirley Rowe

### GREAT NEWS:

It is official. The Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air and Clean Water has been given a 501(c)3 designation as a public charity. This means that any contributions are tax deductible. The first donation that came in since approval is from Joel Stahl as an affirmation of the work we do and to celebrate the birthday of our treasurer, Shirley Rowe. Those funds will help defray the newsletter costs. Thank you, Joel...and Shirley.

# Solar Progress

Solar energy development has a surprisingly long history. The first patent connected with a solar cell was issued to Edward Weston in 1888. In 1921, Albert Einstein won the Nobel Prize for proving the physical implications of quantum theory and describing the photoelectric effect. In the 1950's Florida had a large presence of solar products until government subsidies went to oil companies and oil became the cheaper fuel encouraging building trends to change. In 1973, Skylab was powered by solar cells. In 1977, President Carter installed solar panels on the White House. In 1980, the book, *A Golden Thread*, by Perlin and Buitti covered 2,500 years of solar technology from Greek and Roman times to the present, giving an overview of this energy resource.

Currently Germany is the number one solar consumer. They have government subsidies for solar projects because the country has a goal to be independent of foreign oil. Israel is the world leader at developing solar technologies. In the US, smaller, localized projects are most likely to be built because of the challenges to moving the power over longer distances. Distribution and storing electricity in batteries are still developing technologies. This makes smaller projects more effective.

Training folks who install solar systems requires an understanding of building construction, as well as knowing the science of solar energy. Technical training is important, and there are several courses for certification. The North American Board of Certified Electrical Practitioners (NABCEP) is the current industry standard leader.

For 100 years, we have been extracting fossil fuels from our earth. The easy fossil fuel sources are exhausted and further mining and drilling techniques cause profound damage to the environment. Solar and other renewable energies can help fill our energy needs. We also need to help and learn to waste less and conserve more so we can save the quality of our earth.

*Information from an interview with Justin Charles, Lenape Solar Co. and a Wikipedia entry on solar energy.*



## A BOOST FOR CLEAN ENERGY

On August 2, Representative Bob Filner and 10 co-sponsors introduced the Clean Energy Victory Bonds Act of 2012, H.R. 6375 in the House of Representatives. The bill, officially entitled "To promote the domestic development and deployment of clean energy technologies required for the 21<sup>st</sup> century," will allow all Americans to invest in Treasury Bonds for as little as \$25 each, that will fund a clean energy future. The \$50 billion raised from the bonds will fund clean energy programs that support wind, solar, energy efficient, and electric vehicles in the United States.

We will see what comes of this when the present Congress recesses and the new Congress resumes in the new year, 2013.

# Solar Power in Use

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Some people just “think ahead,” and Gary Klingler is one of them. This time it is solar energy for his home, but he also led the way for recycling in Selinsgrove and for the Freeburg VFD to use grant money to redo the lighting at the station and save the fire company 20% on their lighting bills. It is this kind of conservation and active engagement that can lead the way for all of us to get engaged in cutting back our use of natural resources and be better stewards of the earth.

For his solar system, Gary did his research online, then got three bids for the installation. He decided to have Lenape Solar from Sunbury do the work. He is saving on fuel oil bills because his furnace used to heat his water. Now the sun is the heat source, and it is working well. He has decided to branch out and use solar power to bring electricity to his cabin. The process needed for solar installation “off the grid” is more extensive, but given the challenges and expense of running a line for electricity to the cabin, the solar route is a good option.

This stop led to a trip to Lenape Solar on Second Street in Sunbury

to talk with Justin Charles to learn more about solar Energy. There are several types of solar products. One is Solar Thermal Vacuum Tube Systems, which transform sunlight into useful heat in hot water, such as Mr. Klingler’s roof top system. These tube systems have a 20-year guarantee and will allow a typical family to save 120 gallons of fuel oil or 179 Therms of natural gas or 5,250 kWh of electricity per year, depending on how you currently heat your hot water at home. This is a savings of 80-85% of the fossil fuel generated energy needed for a single family’s hot water. This demonstrates what the term “Reduce your carbon footprint” really means. The savings is multiplied for commercial users, and Steininger’s Laundry and Dry Cleaning in Selinsgrove uses solar energy for their business needs. Farmers are jumping on the solar wagon, as well. Nelson Gingrich raises veal calves and uses solar power to heat their water needs. This promises to be a cost saver on propane gas costs and helps the bottom line. Solar power is a benefit to the Mennonite farmers in the area who can use this natural power source.

Another type of Solar product is Photovoltaic Cells. These cells generate electricity. Solar cells can be so small that they light one bulb for several hours (useful in third world countries and allows students to study at night) or as large as the 30-acre solar farm that was recently installed in Quarryville, PA, that generates enough electricity to power over 4000 homes. For an individual home you can offset as much as 90% of your electric power usage. This photovoltaic cell system is what Mr. Klingler plans for his cabin to have energy independence off the grid.

The overall savings will depend on each situation. Some commercial users can recap their investment cost in 12 months. For homeowners it will take a bit longer. It is helpful to know the government has incentives and rebates that can help with your initial costs. Solar energy will not replace the current sources of power. It is a supplement to what exists, and provides a means to use less fossil fuel.



<http://www.google.com/imgres/um=1&hl=en&client=firefox-a&sa=N&tbo=d&rl=org.mozilla.en->

# DEP Taken to Task By Property Owners

Commentary by Jan Jarret, Nov. 2, 2012. Read more from Jan at <http://jjadhoc.blogspot.com/>

If a government agency tested your water and discovered that it was contaminated with chemicals that could damage your neurological system and cause cancer, wouldn't you expect that agency to let you know? If you are claiming that your water has been contaminated by gas drilling and that agency is the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) your expectations would be too optimistic. According to sworn testimony in a case against DEP for failure to enforce several environmental laws, a division director of DEP laboratories revealed that DEP deliberately withholds complete water test results from property owners and DEP's Oil and Gas division.

Attorneys for a Washington County property owner who are suing DEP for failing to take action to protect their drinking water sent a letter to DEP Secretary Krancer laying out what the DEP laboratory director revealed during a deposition in the case. According to the testimony DEP omits test results for several toxic metals including cadmium, chromium, titanium, cobalt and lithium even if the test results find levels that violate safe drinking

water standards. Apparently, DEP applies this practice of deliberately withholding information crucial to protecting the health of Pennsylvania residents of the gas fields across the Commonwealth.

DEP has apparently decided that Pennsylvanians can't handle the truth when it comes to the impacts of gas drilling on our water supplies. When gas drillers make mistakes and inadvertently contaminate nearby drinking water supplies, DEP's job is to hold the driller accountable and ensure that property owners get safe water and compensation for the loss of their water supply and exposure to cancer-causing toxic metals. DEP, however, seems to be protecting the gas drillers rather than the health of people in the gas fields.

Representative Jesse White is asking the federal Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Attorney's office and Pennsylvania Attorney Linda Kelly to investigate DEP for fraud and misconduct. Pennsylvanians deserve full information about the impacts of gas drilling, and they need to trust the agency charged with protecting our health, air and water. DEP is charged with protecting the citizens of Pennsylvania, not the gas drillers.

## MORE ABOUT THE DEP

Don Hopey writing in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on October 14, 2012, pointed out in his article entitled, *DEP Alters Policy on Foul-Water Notifications*, stated that the state Department of Environmental Protection has a new policy for water contamination cases related to Marcellus Shale gas well operations whereby contamination determination letters recommended by field offices and previously sent by field offices to affected residents or property owners, are now to be sent to Harrisburg for review by top administrators, who will determine whether such letters should be issued or delayed. All positive contamination reports are to be sent to Harrisburg as a Major Action Advisory (MAA) prior to being issued—they are to go to top administrators for review. DEP district office staffers are concerned about the policy, which would allow headquarters' officials to second guess their test-based contamination determinations, but they will not speak on the record because of concerns about job security.

In contradiction to an email exchange that stated that only those letters showing contamination should be forwarded to Harrisburg, and not all DEP water quality test determinations, it was stated in a follow-up response that determination letters that don't show contamination as well as those that do will go through the MAA process. Concern is that Harrisburg is making decisions on the notification instead of the DEP which uses a science-based process that reported water test results "honestly and independently and professionally."

One person, whose water started bubbling with methane in February and has continued through the spring and summer, said he has been working with the DEP on the problem and was happy to receive the determination letter. He further noted "I don't like the idea of someone in Harrisburg, who's not an expert, intervening one bit....The letter should come from the science end of things, and that's where the determination should be made."



## Solar Farm

On a windy October morning on the outskirts of the farming community of Quarryville, 150 people sat together under a tarp. After a few “thank you’s” to the people who made the event possible, a switch was thrown causing a roar of approval from the crowd. When the switch was thrown 4261 homes began receiving clean electricity from the Keystone Solar Project. Located on 30 acres of farmland, this is the largest solar farm in Pennsylvania. It took two years for design, development, and financing and a mere three months to construct the project. Cooperation between the community, support from the Clean Air Coalition, The Philadelphia Phillies, the following Universities: Drexel, F&M, Eastern, Juniata, Marywood, and Millersville—made the project possible. During construction the largest

piece of equipment was no larger than a bob cat, and the land was not disturbed nor covered with an ounce of concrete. As far as maintenance for the solar panels, rain showers keep them quite clean; but they may be washed once a year. A species of grass, one that after growing to a certain height falls over, was planted between the rows and under the panels meaning mowing is required only one or two times a year.

While we sat a stone’s throw from where 5 megawatts of electricity were being produced there were no smoke stacks spewing CO<sub>2</sub>, mercury, methane, etc. There were no trucks hauling away a toxic slurry to be transported to Ohio (unless it spilled into a fishing stream on the way). The only sounds were next to one of the five converters. Annually the facility will prevent

4,200 tons of carbon dioxide going into the atmosphere.

During the Open House a solar spill occurred. Guess what we called it----A Nice Day.

Even if you can’t afford your own solar panels, you can do your part in reducing pollution and encouraging clean energy in Pa. With Pa energy choice you can choose a supplier who uses renewable energy.

Community Energy Solar <http://www.communityenergysolar.com/>

Green MountainEnergy

<http://www.greenmountain.com/> or search at the website

<http://www.papowerswitch.com/ways-to-save-energy/renewable-energy-resources/>

## BREAKING ALL THE RULES (SOMETHING TO TALK WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT!)

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In association with six Pennsylvania groups, Earthworks released an unprecedented study, *Breaking All the Rules: The Crisis in Oil & Gas Regulation* revealing that states across the country fail to enforce their oil and gas development regulations. The one-year, in-depth examination of enforcement data and practices – in Pennsylvania, Texas, Ohio, New York, New Mexico and Colorado –also includes interviews with ex-industry and state agency employees. “Pennsylvania’s enforcement of state oil and gas rules is broken. In Pennsylvania and across the country, public health and safety are at risk because states are failing to uphold the rule of t law. “ says Earthworks’ Senior Staff Attorney Bruce Baizel.

Pennsylvania is not seeking, documenting, sanctioning, deterring ,and cleaning up problems associated with irresponsible oil and gas operations such as chemical spills, equipemtn failure, accidents and discharges into drinking water supplies.

Among the studies findings

-More that 85% of all active oil and gas wells in Pennsylvania go uninspected each year: 66,000 wells.

-Rule violators are rarely punished, even more rarely of late; on average only 20% of violations have been penalized in 2012, down form 24% in 2011

-Worst violators are getting worse: effective regulatory enforcement would stop repeat violators. In Pennsylvania, repeat violations are increasing.

See the rest of this article at

<http://responsibledrillingalliance.org/index.php/education/health/387>

### **FACEBOOK CONTACT INFORMATION**

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Rivertown-Coalition-for-Clean-Air-and-Clean-Water/223158741074042>

### **MAILING INFORMATION**

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