



## Save the dates:

### Annual Virtual Finance & Business Symposium – July 21, 2021

Topics to be covered include:

- Financial and operational impacts of COVID
  - Collections Procedures
  - Winter Moratorium on Disconnection
  - Responding to the USPS deficiencies in billing and payment delivery
  - Owner requests for termination of service to tenant-occupied dwellings
- \*Registration is open so please be certain to register today!**

### 2021 PMEA Annual Conference – September 8-10, 2021

Penn Stater Hotel & Conference Center, State College

#### Nominations -

Nominations to the PMEA Board of Directors are currently being accepted. All board members are elected at large but there must at least one board member from a borough with less than 1,600 meters. With 3 seats open, one seat currently represents a community of less than 1,600 meters. Nominations should be made by the elected council as the seat is awarded to the municipality and not the specific individual. The election for board members and officers will occur at the business meeting during the annual conference in September. To submit a nomination, please contact Diane Bosak, [bosak@papublicpower.org](mailto:bosak@papublicpower.org).

**Registration for the PMEA Annual Conference is now open. Information has been sent via email and also included in this newsletter.**

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## The Art and Science of Communication

*By: David Woglom, Associate Director, Lafayette College Meyner Center*



Communication is an art and a science that can never be fully mastered. The best communicators in the world say that no matter how hard you try, the best communicators know that expressing oneself to another person or group requires both the skill of the person doing the communicating and the person or people

receiving the communication. Therefore, it requires a skillset of the person sending the signal to know how to best send the communication.

In business, clear and understandable communication is the lifeblood of operations. It is often the beginning of policy enactment and sets the game plan for a project. From a leader's viewpoint, it influences the attitude of the staff, and provides the ability to empower them to carry out the policy and run their departments. It also can stimulate and motivate the staff and build cohesion amongst members. In municipal government, clear communication also keeps the public informed and provides the elected officials with kind of information that they need to set policy. Excellent communication skills utilized by a manager or department head will be the glue that keeps the organization together.

Communication is defined as "the art and science of transmitting, conferring and exchanging thoughts, information, and messages through speech, writing, sending signals, and behavior." It can be either verbal or written. It also takes a speaker and a receiver, and therein lies a potential for misunderstanding because while the receiver may be listening to the speaker, he/she may not totally

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hear all that is said. Listening is not necessarily the same thing as hearing because hearing requires understanding of what the speaker is saying. When in written form, the reader may not understand the intent of the writer because even the written word can be interpreted differently. The best communicators know that follow-up and regular interaction are the best ways to ensure that the receiver of information fully understands the intent of the presenter of the information.

Communication in the public sector typically goes in three different directions: upward to elected officials, downward to staff, and out to the general public. The best leaders know that all communication in these three different directions needs to be consistent and keep the respective parties informed to what they need to know. When dealing with elected officials, managers and department heads need to keep in mind how much and what kind of information the board wants to know, and to give them the right amount without giving them more than they want to hear. When dealing with a staff, leaders need to keep the information focused on both the process and the intended result. When providing information to the general public, leaders need to remember that transparency in government is crucial despite the fact that most members of the general public are interested only in information dealing with public services, tax rates, and other fees that affect them.

The top principles of communication in the public sector are:

1. Be honest with everyone, even when the truth may not be what someone wants to hear.
2. Listen, listen, listen even though it takes time. Maintain an open mind to divergent opinions.
3. Be a master of your subject matter and understand the short- and long-term ramifications.
4. Recognize that relationships matter. People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.
5. Be specific and concise in information. Clarity and brevity are important.
6. Understand the wants and needs of the board, staff, and community.
7. Be careful about making promises of future action and timelines. Remember that if you promise and do not deliver on time, someone will remember.
8. Have compassion and empathy for the general public.

The best communicators know that effective communication is always a work-in-progress. It always takes time, effort, and a willingness to follow through. There are no effective shortcuts.

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## Several PA Communities Participate in Peaking Project

*Courtesy of: Hometown Connections*



In 2018, American Municipal Power, Inc. (AMP) looked closely at industry changes impacting the joint action agency and its members. The forecasted increase of PJM's capacity and transmission charges throughout the AMP footprint were of chief concern. PJM is the regional transmission organization (RTO) that coordinates the movement of wholesale electricity throughout 13 midwestern and eastern states, including the majority of AMP members. To help members offset these cost increases, AMP developed a behind the meter peaking project. The first phase of the project is

integrating PowerSecure generation systems into 14 member utilities in Ohio and Pennsylvania, providing benefits to a total of 27 communities.

In PJM, capacity charges are based on a utility's peak demand during the five highest peak hours during the summer months. Transmission charges cover the cost to deliver electricity from power-generating facilities to the utility's electric substations and to the beginning of the utility's distribution system. Transmission charges are based on a utility's peak demand during the single highest peak hour of the year.

AMP engaged PowerSecure for an all-inclusive, fixed-price project to site, install, and maintain its Tier 4 Final PowerBlock distributed generation systems. The primary purpose of the Behind the Meter Peaking Project is to provide generation operated during PJM's annual peak hours in order to reduce transmission and installed capacity demands. The units will also be available to operate during hours when market prices are higher than the operating costs of the generators, as well as to provide emergency backup power if the grid goes down. AMP estimates the units will operate approximately 50 hours annually.

AMP owns the PowerSecure systems, finances their construction, and dispatches the resources. AMP evaluates members' systems and power profiles to see if their potential construction sites and power supply requirements make them suitable for the program. When qualified members sign on, PowerSecure prepares the sites, designs the installation, manages construction, and maintains and remotely monitors the units.

The cost and financial benefits for the participating AMP members are based on their share of the total project. Currently, the project divides approximately 70 MW of total generating capacity among participating members. The project encompasses 14 sites operating 29 PowerSecure PowerBlock generation systems. If, for example, one utility requires 7 MW of capacity, it pays 10% of the project costs and receives an equal amount of the financial savings from the peak shaving operations.

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The program is currently in Phase 1, serving AMP members in Ohio and Pennsylvania. At this time, four sites are fully commissioned and operational, eight sites are under various stages of construction, and two sites are still in the development stage. The Pennsylvania municipalities in Phase 1 are: **Ephrata, Perkasio, Blakely, Hatfield, Weatherly, Schuylkill Haven, Girard, and Mifflinburg.**

For this program, AMP owns the generators, leases the land from the community, and manages the interconnection process with the local distribution system and the incumbent transmission utility. PowerSecure manages the construction, including any sub-contractors. AMP serves as the primary dispatcher of the units, with PowerSecure as the backup dispatcher. PowerSecure monitors each system 24/7/365 and runs testing on each unit once per month to run system diagnostics, sending alerts to AMP and to the host utility if they notice a problem. Utility employees receive maintenance and troubleshooting training for the generators, with PowerSecure able to send local crews to a site whenever needed.

In addition to partnering with joint action agencies, PowerSecure works directly with utilities to provide their commercial and industrial accounts as well as entire communities with peak demand savings and emergency backup power, to help communities and businesses alike prepare for the unexpected.

For the complete article, please visit Hometown Connections at <https://www.hometownconnections.com/news/ohio-pennsylvania-communities-benefit-from-distributed-generation/>.



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## PMEA Conference Registration Now Open

The PMEA Board is excited to be able to join with all our members and associate members in person this year. We will be complying with all required COVID safety protocols required to be in place at the time of our conference.

As you may have heard, we have had to change venues for this year's conference due to the closure of the Nittany Lion Inn. This year's conference will be held at the Penn Stater in State College, and we have also made a few changes to the annual program as you will note on the draft agenda below.



### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

11:00 am -5:00 pm	PMEA Golf Outing <i>Penn State Blue Golf Course</i>
3:00 -9:00 pm	Room Check-in
6:00 -9:00 pm	Welcoming Hospitality Reception/Associate Member Exhibits

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

7:00 -8:00 am	Continental Breakfast and Registration
8:00 – 9:00 am	Welcoming Address & Opening Session
9:00 -10:00 am	Session
10:15 -11:15 am	Session
11:15 am -12:15 pm	Session
12:15 -1:30 pm	Lunch – Awards and Recognitions (introduction of associate members)
1:30 – 4:00 pm	Alternate A for MANAGERS, ELECTED OFFICIALS
1:30 – 4:00 pm	Alternate B for SUPERINTENDENTS
4:00 – 5:30 pm	Reception/ Cracker Barrel with Associate Members

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

7:00 -8:15 am	Buffet Breakfast
8:15 -11:00 am	PMEA Annual Business Meeting

Registrations must be received on or before August 2. We cannot guarantee hotel availability and/or conference hotel rates after that date. Information has sent to each municipality and associate member via email. Please contact Diane Bosak at PMEA if you have questions or need golf or conference registration information, [bosak@papublicpower.org](mailto:bosak@papublicpower.org), or 717-489-2088.

Stay tuned for additional updates about conference topics and speakers!

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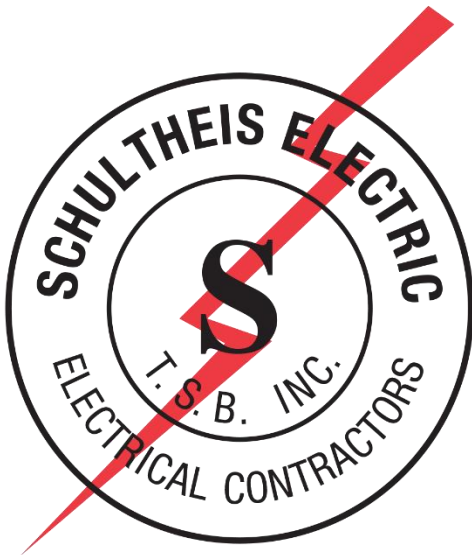
## Zelienople Installs Underground Lines



The Borough of Zelienople recently began Phase 2 of their Streetscape project. Crews are installing underground utilities and constructing new curbs & sidewalks along Main Street.

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## Associate Member Spotlight



TSB Inc. dba Schultheis Electric is an electrical contractor that has been serving the Tri-State area since 1979. Our firm specializes in heavy industrial, institutional, utility, and transportation work.

We are pre-qualified with PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and currently hold the electrical services and/or contract for multiple PennDOT Districts, the County of Washington, the Borough of Tarentum, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, and the Pennsylvania Department of General Services.

Currently our TEGG testing / preventative maintenance department services western and central PA. Schultheis Electric also has a residential service department that offers generator maintenance and other services.

For more information, please visit the website at [www.tsbinc.net](http://www.tsbinc.net).

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## We Want to Hear From You

Please share with us your exciting projects and photos for future newsletters. Your submissions should be sent to [bosak@papublicpower.org](mailto:bosak@papublicpower.org) at any time and we will use them in upcoming editions.

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