



## Montour plant goes prime time on History channel series on trains

The History channel is launching a new series about the history and importance of trains in America, and PPL's Montour power plant and coal train will be part of the premiere episode at 10 p.m. Nov. 11.

"Extreme Trains" is hosted by Matt Bown, a train conductor who reveals the incredible inner workings and past lives of the powerful locomotives that haul huge loads across the nation and deliver passengers to their destinations. The eight-part series shows the part these trains have played in shaping American history and how vital trains are to American life today.

In the spring, Bown and his film crew followed one of PPL's coal trains from the Bailey mine in southwestern Pennsylvania, across the famous Horseshoe Curve west of Altoona and into its final destination at Montour. The crew spent an entire day touring the plant and interviewing plant employees and plant manager Michael Munroe.

The film crew heard about how PPL was one of the power companies to pioneer the idea of owning coal cars, and it observed how the coal is unloaded and transferred on conveyors and used to produce reliable energy. Since 1964, PPL-owned railroad cars have been delivering coal to the company's Pennsylvania coal-powered plants.

Over the years, train locomotives operated by such rail giants as



Norfolk Southern, Conrail and Penn Central have been used to pull the coal cars. But PPL owns the individual hopper cars that carry the coal from southwestern and central Pennsylvania. One train with 115 cars carries 14,000 tons of coal. It takes about 2 minutes per car to unload the coal.

In 2007, the plant generated 10.9 billion kilowatt-hours, enough electricity to supply about 1 million typical homes.

"Extreme Trains" celebrates the men and women who work on the railroads, often doing tough, gritty jobs in extreme conditions just to keep America moving. Future



Matt Bown, host of "Extreme Trains," and his film crew interview employees at PPL Montour, including Michael Munroe, plant manager (in yellow).

episodes will cover the use of freight and high-speed trains. Featured trains will include a Union Pacific refrigeration train, a steam train, Amtrak's Empire Builder, the Ringling Brothers Circus train and the Transcontinental.

For more information, visit <http://www.history.com/extreme-trains>.

# Montour Unit 1 resumes generation

*Work rebuilding cooling tower structure expected to be finished by year's end*

Unit 1 at PPL's Montour power plant is again generating electricity, using temporary water-cooling equipment until repairs are completed on the cooling tower.

On Aug. 5, a section of a wooden structure encircling the base of the Unit 1 cooling tower failed. There were no injuries, no structural effects on the 370-foot-tall concrete cooling tower, and no environmental effects from the incident.

Engineers determined that the appropriate action was to rebuild the entire wooden structure, which is used to distribute water. The structure was torn down, and work to build a new one is under way. That work should be completed by the end of the year, enabling Unit 1 to return to normal operation.

A thorough engineering analysis by PPL staff, the company that built

the cooling tower and an independent consulting firm found no inherent problems with the wooden structure's design that would preclude PPL from building a similar structure as a replacement.

PPL engineers were working on plans to replace the wooden structure, which was built as part of the plant's construction in the early 1970s.

Engineers also inspected the wooden structure that rings the Unit 2 cooling tower. They determined that the structure is safe to operate. PPL is continuing with plans to replace the Unit 2 structure within the next few years.

PPL believes that the main factors contributing to the failure of the Unit 1 structure were two major icing events, the most recent in 2007, that put considerable stress on the

structure from added weight, and piping changes that were made in the 1990s and placed additional load on the structure. PPL did not make those same piping changes on the Unit 2 structure.

To enable the 750-megawatt, coal-fired generating unit to return to service, PPL brought in temporary mechanical cooling towers to reduce the temperature of water used in the plant for cooling purposes.

The Montour plant uses water from the West Branch of the Susquehanna River for cooling plant equipment. The cooling towers reduce the temperature of water that has been used in the plant before it is returned to the river system via Chillisquaque Creek.

PPL has estimated that repairs to the cooling tower structure will cost \$20 million.



The new wooden structure encircling the base of the Unit 1 takes shape.

# Area fire and rescue personnel assist PPL in Montour drill

Several local fire companies and emergency rescue organizations in Montour and Columbia counties assisted PPL employees in an emergency drill on Oct. 9 at the Montour power plant.

As part of the drill, five fire companies and more than 60 firefighters and rescue personnel responded to assist the plant's trained group of firefighting employees in a scenario built around a fire on a conveyor that transports limestone.

Without the conveyor, the plant is unable to bring the limestone needed for the new scrubber system, one of the best environmental controls available today.

"We're grateful for the participation of all the local fire companies and emergency rescue personnel who assisted us," said John Tripoli, PPL's safety and environmental compliance manager at the plant. "Drills help us fine-tune our emergency response and give us valuable information to help safeguard employees and inform the public.

"We'd like to extend a special thanks to Washingtonville Fire Chief Gary Roberts for helping to plan and organize the drill," he said.



Photos by Fred Iobst. Kayaking on Lake Chillisquaque.

## Annual Chilli Challenge draws 200 hardy athletes

Undaunted by the chilly autumn air, more than 200 people gathered at PPL's Montour Environmental Preserve on Oct. 18 for the sixth annual Chilli Challenge adventure triathlon.

The Chilli Challenge derives its name from the 165-acre Lake Chillisquaque, which is in the center of the preserve near the Montour power plant. The preserve is a major sponsor of the race along with the Montour County Recreation Authority and the Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau.

The terrain, lake, and the beautiful countryside and fall colors around the preserve provide the backdrop for this popular event, which involves bicycling for 20 miles, paddling in canoes and kayaks on the lake for another two miles and a

5.2-mile run. Participants this year ranged in age from 7 to 74 and came from throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

"We had one participant this year who traveled all the way from Washington state," said Kevin Drewencki, superintendent-Environmental Preserves for PPL.

"We're happy to support the race because the Montour County Recreation Authority shares our goals of providing places for people to be outside, enjoy nature, and learn about conservation and plant and wildlife preservation," Drewencki said.

Proceeds from the event benefit the authority, which uses the funds to enhance trails, playgrounds and other outdoor activities in the county.

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## Upcoming events at PPL Montour Environmental Preserve

### The Importance of Pollinators

**2-3 p.m. Nov. 9**

Imagine a world without bees or other pollinators. There would be no flowers, fruit, coffee or even chocolate. Learn more about the importance of pollinators during a program from 2-3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 9, at PPL's Montour Environmental Preserve.

Mary Jo Gibson, master gardener, will discuss the current population of pollinators and the important role they play in our ecosystem. Find out how the work of bees, butterflies, birds and other animals contributes to the continued success of flowering plants and fruits.

The program, which is free and great for all ages, will take place at the Environmental Education Center. For more information and directions, contact the preserve at 570-437-3131 or [jdbeam@pplweb.com](mailto:jdbeam@pplweb.com).

### Geocaching

**1:30-3:30 p.m. Nov. 22**

Join a 21<sup>st</sup> century treasure hunt in a program that combines the fun of hiking with GPS technology from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 22, at PPL's Montour Environmental Preserve.

George Dalious, local geocaching enthusiast, will explain everything from the basics of purchasing a GPS device to the rules of the game and safe hiking tips. The program will conclude with a search for some nearby hidden caches.

The program, which is free and great for all ages, will begin at the Environmental Education Center. There will be a limited number of GPS units available to borrow; however, if you have one, please bring it along.

For more information and directions, contact the preserve at 570-437-3131

or e-mail [jdbeam@pplweb.com](mailto:jdbeam@pplweb.com). To learn more about geocaching at PPL's environmental preserves, visit [www.pplgeocaching.com](http://www.pplgeocaching.com).

**Directions:** At Washingtonville, turn right as if heading toward Strawberry Ridge. At the first intersection, turn left onto PPL Road. Continue north on PPL Road past the Montour power plant and a group of greenhouses to the intersection with Preserve Road. Turn right onto Preserve Road. Montour Environmental Preserve's office and

*Don't miss the History channel's new series, "Extreme Trains," about the history of trains in America. Premiere episode, which includes interviews with PPL Montour employees, airs at 10 p.m. Nov. 11. See cover story for more details.*