

# Inside Susquehanna

April 2009 News for neighbors of the PPL Susquehanna nuclear power plant



## Informative and unique, Susquehanna tours offer broad overview of nuclear energy

There's a bus waiting at PPL's Susquehanna Energy Information Center on Route 11, and friendly, informative guides ready to take you on a unique tour at no charge. All you have to do is call or drop in to take advantage of it.

"As part of our community outreach, we offer perimeter tours of the Susquehanna nuclear power plant to school and civic groups and individuals," said Joe Scopelliti, PPL's community relations manager. "We're always eager to provide tours that explain how a nuclear power plant generates clean, reliable electricity, how it can help to secure the nation's energy independence, and how industry and nature can coexist."

Tours last about 45 minutes. Guests meet at the Susquehanna Energy Information Center, 634 Salem Blvd.,

across the road and down the hill from the plant where they get an overview of nuclear energy and plant history.

From there, they board a bus with wide windows for a panoramic view of the plant, and surrounding landscape. As the bus travels around the outside of the plant's security fence, a PPL host describes plant operations and answers questions. To arrange a tour, call toll-free 1-866-832-3312.

For many people in Columbia, Montour and Luzerne counties, the plant tour has become a tradition and has helped provide a broader understanding of the benefits of nuclear energy.

Brian Mangan, associate professor of environmental science and biology and director of the Environmental Science Program at King's College in Wilkes-

*(continued on page 3)*



## One for the record books — Susquehanna Unit 2 posts 2nd best run in U.S. history

PPL's Susquehanna nuclear power plant has made its mark in the history of nuclear power.

When plant operators safely shut down the Unit 2 reactor on April 7 to begin a planned refueling and maintenance outage, the unit had generated electricity safely for 723 consecutive days since its last refueling and maintenance outage in 2007.

The milestone marked the second-longest run by a nuclear generating unit in the United States, according to figures provided by the Nuclear Energy Institute, and also set a record for the Susquehanna plant.

Continuous operation of Unit 2 helped the two-unit Susquehanna plant set a record by generating 19,046,000 megawatt-hours in 2008, which is enough to power about 2 million homes.

"The dedication and attention to detail of employees who keep these units in peak operating condition enables us to generate electricity safely and reliably for the families and businesses who depend on it," said Neil Gannon, vice president-Nuclear Operations for PPL Susquehanna.



All aboard: Joe Scopelliti (right) welcomes visitors from South Korea on a recent bus tour.

# Annual maintenance project helps local economy

As it usually does every year, a part-time community has taken up residence in the Berwick area for the refueling and maintenance outage at PPL's Susquehanna nuclear power plant.

And those more than 1,500 additional people — PPL employees from other locations and contractors — who have been brought in to help the plant's regular staff accomplish all of the important outage work, also help the local economy.

"In addition to their valuable work at the plant, all the extra workers are filling tables at local restaurants and rooms in hotels and rental properties and shopping in local stores," said Neil Gannon, vice president-Nuclear Operations for PPL Susquehanna. "Our annual outages help drive additional revenue for local businesses, a side benefit that we're happy to bring to our neighbors."

Local businesses look forward to getting reacquainted with their seasonal visitors, many of whom are like extended family.

"The annual maintenance outage brings to mind an image of busy times, hard work and nice people," said Mary Baker, manager of the Budget Host Patriot Inn on Route 11, halfway between Bloomsburg and Berwick.

"We've been lucky to welcome power plant workers and visitors for the 20 years we've been in operation," she said. "It's especially pleasant when

familiar faces from prior years resurface and we immediately know what our next month will be like. For the plant workers, it's old home week as they see their favorite clerks and housekeepers, some of whom have been here our entire 20 years."

Among the many local favorite eateries, the Big B Restaurant and Ice Cream Parlor, located just north of Berwick, always sees more customers at this time of year, said owner Bill Soberick.

"There's definitely an increase in business, especially during shift changes," said Soberick, who also serves as chairman of the Columbia County Board of Commissioners. "We put out extra hoagies and fresh roasted turkey this time of year. Our best sellers are our banana splits and ice cream sundaes."

Workers also take advantage of the fitness programs at the Berwick Area YMCA, which offers discounted memberships for the workers during the outage.

"It's interesting to me to think about

this great partnership among the plant, the Berwick community and all the extra people in town right now," Executive Director Nick Pajovich said. "We're important to these folks. Some of them are far away from home and seek out the gym, pool, fitness equipment and even yoga classes here at the Y instead of sitting in their hotel room with nothing to do."

The routines, relationships and schedules set a certain tempo during the days and nights of hard work to make sure the plant stays in peak condition.

"On everyone's mind is: Who will be working nights? And starting when?" Baker said. "Those are the folks for whom front desk clerks make fresh coffee in mid-afternoon because the workers will surface for their 'morning' coffee klatch. As they come out to the lobby, clerks are ready to hand them their bags of clean laundry, which is treasured."

Within a few hours, the day workers start flowing in and the usual topic is what to do for dinner and requests to do laundry.

"The workers discover the special eating places the area has to offer, such as the local fish fries during Lent," Baker said. "They each have their favorites, like wing night at Scoreboard, a stop at the Big B and routines that they associate with their stay in our area."

"As the outage draws to an end, we put together a party in our meeting room for the two shifts of workers," she said. "Despite the fact that they've already been eating out for weeks and they've been working long days, they still enjoy having a group get-together."

"Before you know it, after months of anticipation and preparation, the outage is over," she said. "Then it's 'See you next year.'"

Hundreds of extra people working with the maintenance outage provide a boost to the local economy.





## Rethinking a policy for used fuel

While the federal government re-evaluates its strategy for spent nuclear fuel, PPL continues to store used fuel safely at the Susquehanna plant.

The federal government is responsible by law for disposal of used fuel from nuclear power plants, but recently eliminated nearly all funding for a planned disposal facility at Yucca Mountain in Nevada.

While the Yucca Mountain decision is disappointing, further delaying a solution for disposing of used fuel from nuclear power plants, PPL also sees the decision as an opportunity to rethink nuclear waste policy.

PPL Susquehanna will continue to store its used fuel in pools of water next to each reactor and in specially designed concrete storage structures on-site.

Federal law requires the Department of Energy to locate, build and operate an underground disposal facility for used fuel from nuclear power plants. Funding for used fuel disposal comes from a fee on electricity generated by nuclear power plants. PPL has paid \$368 million to the Nuclear Waste Fund since 1983.

In the meantime, PPL continues its support of efforts to get the federal government to meet its commitment for nuclear power plant owners and the people who live near nuclear power plants to take used fuel for disposal, storage or reprocessing.

## Plant tours (continued from page 1)

Barre, schedules plant tours for his students every semester.

"I like to think that the information I give my students regarding nuclear energy is the best it can be," he said. "But there's no substitute for actually visiting a nuclear plant because this experience brings my lectures to life.

"I appreciate PPL's willingness to open their doors to us," Mangan said. "It helps me better fulfill my students' environmental education."

Marvin Metzger, president of the Mountain Top Kiwanis, said the tour satisfied many curiosities about nuclear energy shared by him and fellow club members.

"We learned how clean nuclear energy is beneficial for the nation's security because it lessens the need for foreign fuel sources," he said. "And the security staff that protects the plant is very impressive. You come away feeling very comfortable about the security of the Susquehanna plant."

Metzger said the tour also provided good information about the proposed Bell Bend reactor near the Susquehanna plant. "Not only was it interesting to learn about the proposed reactor, but it was even more encouraging when we learned how many jobs it would provide," he said.

At Salem Elementary School in Berwick, the Susquehanna plant tour is a tradition for fourth-graders, who get a bonus visit to the Susquehanna Riverlands recreational area. Their tour includes a video about energy at the Information Center.

"There's always a worthwhile discussion afterward," said Sally Rudy, one of the fourth-grade teachers at Salem.

"We then tour the plant and our guide explains security, the turbine building, getting water from the river, and of course, the job of the cooling towers. The students are most impressed with the towers, especially when told that someone has to climb the steps to change the light bulbs at the top."

She and Kristen Trivelpiece, the other fourth-grade teacher at the school, said their students equally enjoy their tour of the wetlands in the Riverlands Environmental Preserve because they're all hoping to see some wildlife.

"The naturalist is very knowledgeable and provides a lot of information that isn't always discussed in the classroom," Trivelpiece said. "Not only do they learn about the various animals found there, but also about plants, the Susquehanna River and Native American relics. These subjects are all part of our curriculum.

"The opportunity for our students is a worthwhile experience, and we hope to continue visiting the Susquehanna plant in the future," she said.

Drop-in visitors are welcome at the Susquehanna Energy Information Center from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday year-round, except holidays. From June to September, the Center also is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays and from noon to 4 p.m. Sundays.

Arrangements should be made in advance for large group tours, especially during May and June. "Typically, we have the most visitors during those months," Scopelliti said, "so it's best to call well ahead of the time you'd like to have a tour."

## Stop by the Riverlands on July 18 to see motorized railcars

Members of the North American Railcar Operators Association will return with their small railcars to the Susquehanna Riverlands on July 18.

They will park their railroad motorcars, known as "speeders," on the rail spur at PPL's Susquehanna Energy Information Center on Route 11. Visitors can stop by and look at the cars, and learn how they once carried two to four railroad workers responsible for inspecting the railroad tracks.

The North American Railcar Operators Association last paid a visit to the Riverlands in 2007, attracting rail enthusiasts and history buffs.

Look for more details at [www.pplsusquehanna.com](http://www.pplsusquehanna.com) closer to the event.



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## Susquehanna Riverlands

### Environmental Preserve

#### **Family Fishing Education Day**

Saturday, May 16 (rain or shine)  
8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Lake Took-A-While  
Susquehanna Riverlands

Presented by: Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Columbia County Bassmasters, borough of Berwick and PPL Susquehanna Riverlands

*Advance registration required*

The Riverlands will host a free Family Fishing Education Program for families with children ages 8 to 15 (children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian). We'll even provide the fishing equipment. Call Mike Monico at 570-752-3223 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. to registrater. Deadline is Saturday, May 9. More information can be found at [www.fish.state.pa.us](http://www.fish.state.pa.us).

In addition, the borough of Berwick will have its Community Policing Trailer, educational information and an appearance by McGruff, the Crime Dog. PPL will provide activities for children too young to participate (must be accompanied by a parent or guardian) and will have energy information and perimeter tours of the power plant available.

#### **Basics of Kayaking**

Friday, June 12, 5:30-7 p.m.

Lake Took-A-While  
Susquehanna Riverlands

Presenter: David Buck, Endless Mountain Outfitters

Dave Buck, owner of Endless Mountain Outfitters, will bring his expertise in paddling sports to Lake Took-A-While as he hosts a program on the increasingly popular sport of kayaking. He will cover the basic types of kayaks, equipment and accessories, as well as techniques for paddling and controlling the craft. Different kayak models will be on

display, and a lucky few participants may get a chance to paddle out on the lake.

The program will be set up at the flagpole just off the lake's south parking lot. If it rains, it will be held in the Susquehanna Energy Information Center.

#### **16th Annual Fourth of July**

##### **Butterfly Count**

Saturday, June 20, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Susquehanna Energy Information Center  
Presented by: Alan and Monica Gregory, count coordinators

We are mainly looking for dedicated people with a love for butterflies, the ability to handle some moderately hilly terrain and a willingness to help. Information collected in this count will be reported to and compiled by the North American Butterfly Association. Participants should bring binoculars, a field guide, water and a light lunch. The \$3 participation fee will go to NABA. For more information or to register, contact count coordinators Alan and Monica Gregory at 570-788-1425.



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