



GREATER BOWIE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Are rising energy costs wreaking havoc on your bottom line?

Please attend one of the following Information Meetings to learn more about joining the GBCC Electricity Cooperative:

**Tuesday, June 13, 2006 at 3 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room
at Bowie City Hall**

or

**Thursday, June 22, 2006 at 3 p.m. in Room 204
at Bowie City Hall**

Maryland businesses are feeling the effects of deregulated natural gas and electricity prices. Current pricing is being driven by reduced US refinery production, increased US and China consumption, international terrorism, an unprecedented hurricane season in the Gulf, and delays in passing energy legislation. In the midst of all this bad news, there is good news for Maryland businesses.

The Greater Bowie Chamber of Commerce has developed an energy cooperative to assist Chamber members in purchasing electricity in a deregulated market. Increased purchasing power and a competitive bid process help members save money and enjoy long-term budget stability.

Deregulation legislation allows Maryland commercial customers to stay with their current energy supplier or purchase electricity on a contract basis from another licensed supplier. Contract prices are based on a negotiated or competitive selection process controlled by the customer. Prices are set for a specified term. Choosing a supplier typically provides Chamber members price and budget stability for a contract period of 12 to 36 months.

The Energy Purchasing Cooperative pools the buying power of commercial customers to procure energy at the best available competitive market price. The program also saves individual Chamber members time and expense in choosing a supplier on their own. Members participating in the program also gain useful information on reducing consumption through the implementation of an energy management program.

This value-added service is available to Chamber members only. A volunteer Advisory Board of participating members oversees and manages the competitive bid process. Co-op members are invited to participate in education and training sessions and at informational meetings involving the development of the Request for Proposal and the selection of the supplier. Participation in the cooperative requires continuous membership in the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce during the term of the initial energy Agreement.

Co-op membership is based on the individual member's location. Members pay a registration fee for each location. Each location can have multiple meters or accounts. Members complete a co-op application and credit application. Members must meet the credit qualifications stipulated by the suppliers. Members must remain in the program through the RFP process. Members have the right to accept or reject the final price offer. Members who reject the final price will not receive a refund and will need to make other arrangements for electricity or natural gas supply. Each member will contract directly with the new supplier. Once the accounts are transferred to the new supplier, the Energy Purchasing Cooperative activities are complete.

The program assumes that membership will be comprised of 15 to 30 locations representing approximately 100 to 150 accounts. The proposed membership fee is \$250.00 per location. The program should provide a positive cash flow for the Chamber.

The anticipated program outcomes are:

- Increased membership recruitment and retention
- Member education and program focus on an issue of local, state and national concern
- Increased purchasing power
- Competitive energy prices
- Shared costs to prepare a bid
- Shared technical support and expertise
- Elimination of the need for the individual to go through the process alone
- A proactive approach to an ever-increasing challenge
- Expansion of services to members

For more information,
please contact Kelly Pierce at the Greater Bowie Chamber of Commerce
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