

LOCAL & STATE

Commissioners County Reviews Driver's Policy

STAFF REPORT

The Fulton County commissioners took time Tuesday to reflect upon and make suggestions for possible alterations to their existing driver's policy that was enacted in mid-December 2007.

Business manager Tim Stanton presented the commissioners with a copy of the existing policy that mandates county employees convicted of driving under the influence cannot operate a county-owned vehicle. Furthermore, the document states drivers with any convictions reported shall be placed on driving restriction.

Stanton asked for additional clarification to enable him to determine who does and does not have permission to drive county vehicles.

Stanton indicated he has the capability to reference employee DUI and moving violations annually through PennDOT if written consent for a search is given. If an employee having access to county vehicles does not consent to the background search, their driving privileges are revoked by the county.

The commissioners agreed each incident should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis annually, and a points system could be followed based on the severity of infractions.

Also on hand for the PComp safety discussion conversation were Bobby Snyder of Snyder Insurance Agency and Christine McQuade of Services for Children.

Paul Johnston and Kenny Wuertenberg of the Fulton County Parks and Recreation Commission along with program director Chanin Mountz met with the commissioners regarding a request for funding from the county's 2009 general budget. The Commission, which has organized bike rides, hikes, children's camps and various adult courses this year, made a formal request of \$5,000.

The commission currently receives funding from an annual fundraiser as well as through membership fees paid by Ayr, Todd, Licking Creek, Dublin, Thompson townships and the McConnellsburg Borough. In exchange, residents in those membership municipalities receive a discounted registration fee on programs.

Commissioner David Hoover applauded the commission's efforts and noted he could see the commission really taking off and growing into something more. Hoover referenced a program referred to as "Around the Mountain" in the Tussey Mountain School District where kids are picked up in villages and transported via bus to various programs.

Wuertenberg added the commission's courses are designed to eliminate duplication of existing programs or courses currently offered locally. Hope exists that the programming will eventually turn the commission from a part-time organization to full time.

The commissioners authorized Chairperson Bonnie Mellott Keefer to sign a notice of award to Eagle Construction for the purchase and installation of a sprinkler system in conjunction with the Fulton County Library's renovation project. The company's bid totalled \$111,900.

On motion by Commissioner Hoover, the county's life insurance coverage with Aetna was increased to pay \$25,000 for natural death and \$50,000 for accidental death. The coverage is extended to full-time, non-union employees, and the change is effective November 1.

Vince Joyce, Jerry Land and Eldon Martin were available to discuss the county's continuity of operations plan. Certain sections of the plan were reviewed, but the final plan must be adopted by a resolution declared by the commissioners.

Justin Bell of Zelenkofske & Axelrod met in executive session pertaining to the completion of the 2007 single audit.

5 Stops On Festival House Tour

Historical Society
hosts annual event this
Saturday and Sunday

By **Lindsay R. Mellott**
STAFF WRITER

The Fulton County Historical Society will showcase five of Fulton County's unique homes and historic structures at its annual Fall Folk Festival house tour this Saturday and Sunday afternoon.

All of the tour's homes this year are located within 10 minutes of McConnellsburg.

Owners Tony and Barb Onorato purchased his grandfather Harry Mellott's 130-acre Shady Spring Farm near McConnellsburg in 2004 and set about restoring its 1880s two-story tenant house, a German four-bay structure with two central front doors that is typical of many farmhouses in this area.

The Tenant House's charming kitchen has been returned to the 1930s period and features a working 1935 GE monitor-top refrigerator, a 1911 Moffat's Electra range and an operating 1920s oak cabinet telephone. Local antiques furnish the home throughout, and its traditional patterned wallpaper was printed with 100-year-old rollers in Canada.

The Onoratos open the Tenant House to guests for nightly, weekly or monthly use. A two-night stay there is being offered in a fundraising raffle to benefit the Historical Society. Raffle tickets can be bought at Morton's Attic, Summer Thyme Floral, Sheep Ridge Farm, the county treasurer's office and the Fulton House over festival weekend.

Near Knobsville, Michael and Linda Crampton have built a board-and-batten home that has large timber beams and wraparound porches on 100 acres of land they purchased about 20 years ago. More than a year ago, they opened the upstairs of the home to bed-and-breakfast guests, and in October 2007 the couple built a two-bedroom structure, The Carriage House, for guests who desire more privacy.

Standout features of Crampton Manor B&B include pine walls, a cathedral ceiling, an upstairs loft overlooking the great room and country-style decorating.

Nadine and Charlie Carbaugh's mountaintop home overlooking McConnellsburg was designed by them as a family retreat. They did much of the work themselves with the help of their two children, Michele and Chance.

The two-story house features an open floor plan, tongue-and-groove knotty pine walls and exposed beams. Its exterior is covered in vinyl that replicates log siding, a feature that keeps maintenance to a minimum. A wide deck on the first floor provides a great spot for the family retreat's main attraction, a spectacular view of the Great Cove, which should be



Nadine and Charlie Carbaugh's mountaintop home overlooking McConnellsburg is one of the homes showcased in this year's Fall Festival house tour.



Linda and Michael Crampton stand in front of Crampton's Bed & Breakfast near Knobsville. The B&B has a cathedral ceiling and country decor.

dressed in autumn's finest colors this weekend.

The county's old jailhouse that has been in the news a lot recently is another stop on the tour. Built next to the courthouse in 1851 for \$2,874, visitors to the jail this weekend will see the cellblock and can share stories they might know about the characters who were housed there.

The Fulton House, headquarters for the Historical Society, is also open to house tour guests and free to the public during the Fall Folk Festival. This landmark building constructed in the late 18th century was a busy inn and stagecoach stop for much of its 200-plus years, but this weekend visitors will find a free museum display of tools and furniture by brothers Luther and Michael Black, a display of loaned teapots, a food stand with homemade beef barley soup and scones and a Friday noon concert featuring the Country Cousins.

Tickets for the house tour are \$10 and can be purchased only at the Fulton House. A map with the homes' addresses is printed on the tickets. The house tour runs from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. each day.



This working 1935 GE monitor-top refrigerator is one of the features of the restored 1930s-period kitchen at the Tenant House located on Shady Spring Farm near McConnellsburg.

Pa. Legislature OKs Electricity Conservation Bill

By **MARC LEVY**

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — A heavily lobbied bill to cut electricity prices and encourage energy conservation easily passed the state Legislature last Wednesday as lawmakers rushed to ease the pain of disappearing rate caps for a growing number of Pennsylvanians.

The bill would require utilities to follow new electricity-buying rules and install millions of "smart" meters, making Pennsylvania the first state to mandate the devices, according to state officials. By 2011, utilities also would have to find ways to reduce overall electricity consumption, although the bill allows them to decide how to achieve that goal.

The bill has been hung up for well over a year as lawmakers sought common ground between consumer advocates, the utilities and Gov. Ed Rendell, who first proposed the legislation in early 2007. On Wednesday, the Senate approved the measure, 47-3, and several hours later the House gave its approval, 186-4, as the chambers rushed to finish business on their last voting day before the Nov. 4 election.

The bill goes to Rendell, who said he plans to sign it.

"This energy bill puts Pennsylvania right at the forefront of the nation in conservation," Rendell told reporters.

Backers said the provisions will save people money as decade-old rate caps for the majority of Pennsylvanians expire over the next 27 months, allowing utilities to collect the full cost of the wholesale power they buy. Rendell said the state's 5 million-plus electricity customers should see more than \$500 million a year in savings starting in 2013.

The sweeping bill also would impose fines up to \$20 million against utilities caught manipulating the price of electricity and allow the Public Utility Commission to reorganize its structure to adjust to the deregulated electricity markets.

Late Tuesday, unable to break utility opposition, senators dropped a provision to require the companies to reduce their rates to reflect savings which they predicted when their industry was deregulated in 1996, but which never materialized. When the caps do expire, the impact of the increases — anticipated to be between 20 and 63 percent, depending on the utility territory — could easily mean hundreds of dollars annually in higher bills for each household and small business.

Under the bill, utilities would have to show state regulators that they are seeking out the lowest-cost

electricity to deliver to ratepayers. As part of that, the utilities would be able to buy electricity in contracts lasting up to 20 years from power providers as a hedge against unpredictable wholesale market prices.

Proponents, including the state's utility consumer advocate, Sonny Popowsky, said they believe that formula will stabilize electric bills and potentially spur construction of new power sources that would add to supply while lowering wholesale prices.

However, utility officials questioned whether buying in long-term contracts was wise, given the potential that a volatile wholesale market price can drop, as well as rise.

"We'll have to look at it a couple years from now and ascertain what it did," said J. Michael Love, president and CEO of the Energy Association of Pennsylvania, an industry group for the state's electric and gas utilities.

Under the new conservation rules, utilities would have to cut annual electricity usage at least 1 percent by May 31, 2011, based on usage estimates made by state regulators. By May 31, 2013, the total reduction would rise to at least 3 percent while utilities would have to slash 4.5 percent of electricity usage during the 100 highest-use hours of the year, when electricity is at its most expensive.

Utilities can bill ratepayers for the cost of their conservation efforts.

In addition, many more customers would receive "smart" power meters that track how much electricity flows into a home in real time, allowing utilities to better respond to outages and offer time-based alternatives to the average monthly rate that they traditionally charge.

Under the bill, utilities would have to provide a smart meter to whomever requests one, install one in all new construction and swap one for any meter that is at least 15 years old.

While major industrial and commercial ratepayers have operated on time-based rates for years, the concept of trying to shift electricity use to periods when fluctuating wholesale electric prices are lowest remains relatively foreign to residential users.

The utilities would be able to charge consumers for the cost of the smart meter, which can vary — about \$200 — depending on the kind. The most advanced ones allow the utility and the customer to gauge usage and cost immediately, instead of once a month after a meter reader makes the rounds.

John Deere Tractor Collection On Display During Fall Folk Festival

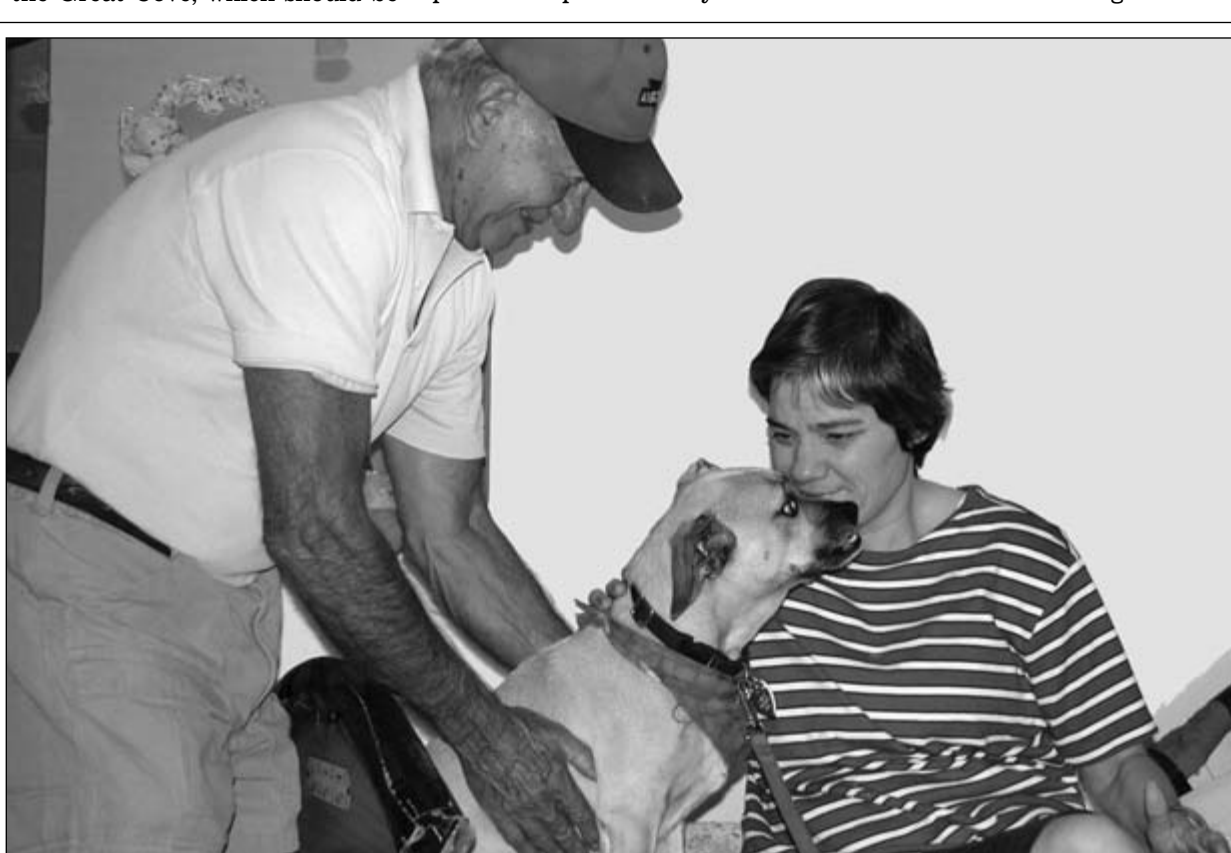
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

The third annual "Can't Help It — I Love that Green" John Deere tractor collection belonging to Fulton County residents Gary H. and Nancy L. Peck will be displayed on the hill in front of their home at 4117 Breezy Point Road, McConnellsburg, this weekend during the biggest county celebration of the year — the Fulton County Fall Folk Festival.

Gary Peck has been an avid 2-cylinder John Deere tractor collector and restorer since the late 1970s when he purchased his first A. His current collection is the 2-cylinder diesel and gas series from 1939-1959. Thirty-one of his favorites will be on display for the public to enjoy this

folk fest weekend. Many are restored and a few are on his when-I-feel-like-it list since his retirement six years ago. His newest John Deere Tractor, a 70 Standard, was completely restored this year and is in show condition. It's a really nice unit and is waiting on the hill to show off its shine to the public.

For those who love antique tractors and want to see one of the largest collections on the East Coast — stop by. Signs can be found off of Rte. 522 near Knobsville on Breezy Point Road. The Pecks are hoping folks stop in and say "hi." Restroom facilities are provided for the public's convenience.



John Gracey, Chipper and Tamie Rittenhouse at Chipper's 100th hospital visit

Little Dog, Woman Bond At Hospital Visits

By **Chanin Rotz-Mountz**
STAFF WRITER

Several medals earned by local athlete John Gracey, who has competed in a gamut of sporting events ranging from pole vaulting to triathlons, now hang bedside in the long-term care unit of Fulton County Medical Center where a young woman and former athlete competes in her own battle — a battle against Huntington's chorea.

Forty-seven-year-old Tamie Rittenhouse joined the long-term care unit as a resident on July 7, 2007. Not long after her arrival, Tamie, the twin sister of Fort Littleton resident Tawnie House, struck up an unlikely bond and lasting friendship with Gracey and his little dog, Chipper, routine visitors of residents staying at the care unit.

Specially trained for nursing home visits, Chipper made his 100th trip to the long-term care unit last Friday afternoon where he again visited with one of his favorite residents — Tamie Rittenhouse.

Gracey related he was initially unsure if Chipper would approach Tamie due to bouts of severe shaking and movement caused by the disease.

"Chipper never hesitated on that first visit and went straight to Tamie and looked up at her. She controlled her arm enough to lower it and pet Chipper. I knew at that moment we would be visiting Tamie every chance we got," Gracey said.

Still suffering spinal troubles and having had three surgeries, Chipper was encountering difficulties standing on his back legs, making it hard

for Tamie and fellow residents to make contact. "It was especially hard for Tamie because her arms are so hard to control. I would give Tamie dog treats, and she would give them to Chipper," stated Gracey, who added he has found himself cutting time with other residents short so he and Chipper could spend additional time with Tamie.

Tamie, Gracey indicated, has often filled his thoughts and earlier in the year at the PA Senior Games, he dedicated his victory and medal in the pole vault in her honor. "It (the medal) now hangs with another one in her room," he said.

Sister Tawnie noted Tamie's joy for Gracey's little dog Chipper doesn't surprise her as she has always been a dog lover. "She just loves Mr. Gracey's visits," she concluded.

NVFCO Holds Open House, Parade



Needmore Volunteer Fire Co. invited the southern Fulton County community to take a look at its new equipment building (seen here at left) at an open house Saturday afternoon that followed the company's annual parade of fire equipment, majorette units, floats and the Southern Fulton High School band. Also on tap for the big celebration were games and the fire company's famously good festival food.

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