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Pennsylvania's Berlin Borough Breaks Ground on Distributed Generation Project

The official groundbreaking for Berlin Borough's multi-million-dollar generation project with [PowerSecure](#) was held Oct. 4, 2016, near the Pennsylvania municipality's substation. The diesel generators, which will be able to provide 3.75 megawatts of electricity for peak load shaving, should be operational by Dec. 1.

The Borough of Berlin serves approximately 1,150 electric customers. It buys wholesale power from American Municipal Power, of Ohio, and then distributes it to its customers.

In anticipation of skyrocketing wholesale electric rates, the Berlin Borough Council voted in April 2016 to award a \$2,234,274 contract to [PowerSecure](#), of Wake Forest, North Carolina. The project will bring 3.75 megawatts of diesel electric generation to town.

The power will be tapped during times of peak usage, with the generators turned on six times a year when electric costs are at their highest.

The generators will serve as backup power should the Borough lose transmission power.



Pictured from left: borough secretary Tom Jones, American Municipal Power marketing manager Brandon Poddany, Councilman Tom Fisher, Mayor Joe Krause, council President Brett Custer, PowerSecure public utilities vice president Robert Tugwell and PowerSecure senior project manager Josh Burns

While the official groundbreaking for Berlin Borough's project was held on October 4 near the municipality's substation, excavation work began in September. About 50 to 55 percent of the construction has already been completed. Conduits along the trench line have been installed, the two concrete pads for the generators have been poured and the generators themselves have been assembled. The diesel generators should be commissioned as operational in December.

"Installing the generators to take advantage of peak load shaving is the best opportunity available for the Borough to minimize the costly and ever increasing transmission line charges for purchased power," said Borough Executive Secretary Tom Jones. "The Borough expects to realize approximately \$300,000 in net annual savings from utilizing the generators during times of peak usage. This will enable our customers to continue to realize the lowest kWh rate of any of the 35 Pennsylvania Municipal Electric Systems and of those charged by most Investor Owned Utilities."

Jones manages the entire electric system, including routine maintenance, emergency outages, capital improvements, and customer needs. "I will be working closely with PowerSecure and AMP in the monitoring of peak usage periods to initiate the activation of the generators in order to achieve maximum peak load savings," he said.

Regarding advice to other public power officials, Jones encourages them to research the project thoroughly and be prepared for opposition from some in the community. He noted, "A project such as this may be difficult for people to comprehend due the complexity of how power is purchased and delivered to the end

user. Communication early and often to customers is extremely critical to gain support for the project because it will take at least one year to realize the benefits of the investment.”

For More Information

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