

# ***Customer Service Performance***

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***2000***

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**Pennsylvania Electric  
Distribution Companies**

**Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
Bureau of Consumer Services**

**2000 Report  
on Customer Service Performance**

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Distribution Companies**

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<http://puc.paonline.com>

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## Introduction

At the end of 1996, Governor Tom Ridge signed into law the Electricity Generation Customer Choice and Competition Act (Act). The Act revised the Public Utility Code by adding Chapter 28, opening Pennsylvania to electric competition.

The Act included language that clearly indicates that the electric distribution companies are to maintain, at a minimum, the levels of customer service to their customers that were in existence prior to the Act's effective date. In response, the Public Utility Commission (PUC) took steps to ensure the continued provision of high-quality customer service to customers of the electric distribution companies (EDCs). The PUC began a process by which it will establish quality of service benchmarks for Pennsylvania EDCs. As a first step in this process, the Commission developed regulations to require the EDCs to report statistics on important components of customer service (52 Pa. Code §§ 54.151—54.156). The customer service components include telephone access to the company, billing frequency, meter reading, timely response to customer disputes, the proper response to customer disputes and payment arrangement requests, compliance with customer service rules and regulations, and interacting with customers in a prompt, courteous and satisfactory manner. These elements are interrelated and are important aspects of EDC customer service. After the Commission has received and analyzed an adequate supply of data from the measurements required under this regulation, it will develop quality of service benchmarks and standards for the EDCs based on these measures. The establishment of benchmarks and standards will be the subject of a future rulemaking at the Commission.

The PUC adopted the final rulemaking that established the reporting requirements on April 23, 1998. The EDCs began reporting the required data to the Commission in August 1999 for the first six months of that year and followed up with a report on annual activity in February 2000. In February 2001, the EDCs submitted data on telephone access, billing, meter reading and response to customer disputes for the year 2000. In March, the Commission received the 2000 results from surveys of customers who had initiated an interaction with their EDC. The companies began surveying customers in January 2000. The PUC's Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS) has summarized the information supplied by the EDCs and the survey data into the charts and tables that appear on the following pages. This is the second year that the Commission prepared a report on EDC customer service performance. This report fulfills the requirement of Section 54.156 of the reporting requirements that provides for the Commission to annually produce a summary report on the customer service performance of each EDC using the statistics collected as a result of the reporting requirements.

The reporting requirements at §54.155 include a provision whereby the BCS is to report to the Commission various statistics associated with informal consumer complaints and payment arrangement requests that consumers file with the Commission. The BCS is

to report a “justified consumer complaint rate”, a “justified payment arrangement request rate”, “the number of informally verified infractions of applicable statutes and regulations”, and an “infraction rate” for each EDC. These statistics are also important indicators of service quality. The BCS has calculated and reported these statistics for a number of years in its annual report, *Utility Consumer Activities Report and Evaluation: Electric, Gas, Water and Telephone Utilities*. The BCS will report the 2000 data in the report to be released later this year. The report offers detailed descriptions of each of these statistics as well as a comparison with statistics from the previous year. Access to the *Utility Consumer Activities Report and Evaluation* and the *2000 Report on Electric Distribution Company Customer Service Performance* will be available on the Commission’s internet site: <http://puc.paonline.com>.

# 1. Company-Reported Performance Data

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In accordance with the quality of service reporting requirements, the EDCs reported statistics for 2000 regarding telephone access, billing, meter reading and disputes not responded to within 30 days. For each of the required measures, the EDCs report data by month and include a 12-month average. With the exception of the telephone access statistics and the small commercial bill information, the required statistics are directly related to the regulation in 52 Pa. Code Chapter 56 Standards and Billing Practices for Residential Utility Service.

## Telephone Access

The Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards include telephone access to an electric distribution company (EDC) because customers must be able to readily contact their EDC with questions, complaints, requests for service and to report service outages and other problems. This component of service is viewed as second only to service reliability in importance to consumers.

In order to produce an accurate picture of telephone access, the EDCs must report three separate measures of telephone access: percent of calls answered within 30 seconds, average busy-out rate and call abandonment rate. The three separate measures avert the possibility of masking telephone access problems by presenting only one or two parts of the total access picture. For example, an EDC may report that it answers every call in 30 seconds or less. If only this statistic is available, one might conclude that the access to the EDC is very good. However, if this company has only a few trunk lines into the company's call distribution system, once these trunks are at capacity, other callers receive a busy signal when they attempt to contact the company. Thus, a large percent of customers cannot get through to the company and telephone access is not very good at all. Therefore, it is important to look at both percent of calls answered within 30 seconds and busy-out rate to get a clearer picture of the telephone access to the EDC.

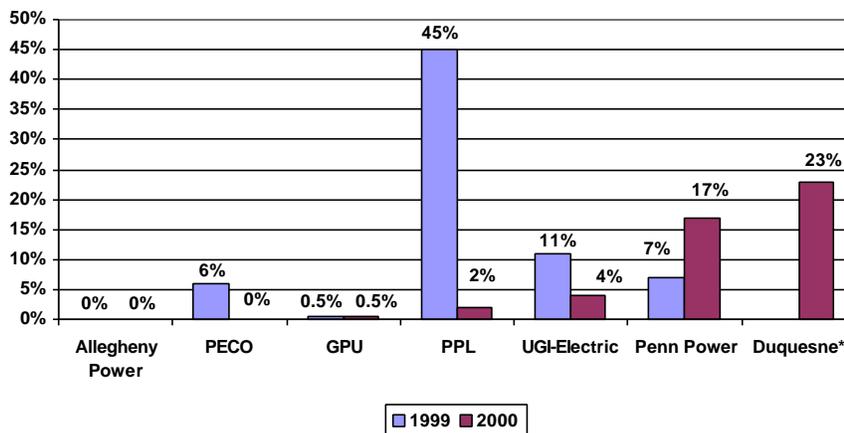
Further, the call abandonment rate indicates how many customers drop out of the queue of customers waiting to talk to an EDC representative. A high call abandonment rate is most likely an indication that the length of the wait to speak to a company representative is too long. Statistics on call abandonment are generally inversely related to statistics measuring calls answered within 30 seconds. The 1999-2000 figures presented later in this report conform to the inverse relationship. The EDCs answering a high percent of calls within 30 seconds had low call abandonment rates and those answering a lower percent of calls within 30 seconds had higher call abandonment rates.

For the most part, attempted contacts to a call center initially have one of two results: they are either "received" by the company or they receive a busy signal and thus are not "received" by the company. Calls in the "busy-out rate" on page 8 represent those attempted calls that received a busy signal or message; they were not "received" by the company because the company lines or trunks were at capacity.

For the calls that are "received" by the company, the caller has several options. One option is to choose to speak to a company representative. When a caller chooses this option, the caller enters a queue to begin a waiting period until a company representative is available to take the call. Once a call enters the queue, it can take one of three routes: it will either be abandoned (the caller chooses not to wait and disconnects the call); it will be answered within 30 seconds; or it will be answered in a time period that is greater than 30 seconds. The percent of those calls answered within 30 seconds is reported to the Commission. The percent that are answered in more than 30 seconds is the inverse of this percent. Thus, if 80% were answered within 30 seconds, 20% were answered in more than 30 seconds.

This report presents the EDC statistics on telephone access in the following way. The first chart shows the busy-out rate. This is the ratio of calls to the EDC's call center(s) that received a busy signal divided by the number of calls that were "received" by the call center(s). The second chart presents the average call abandonment rates. As noted earlier, abandoned calls are those that successfully enter the queue to wait to speak to a company representative. However, at some point, the caller ended the call prior to speaking to a company representative. The last chart on telephone access shows the percent of calls answered within 30 seconds. These are customers who were able to get into the company's call center queue and waited to speak with a representative of the EDC.

## Average Busy-out Rate

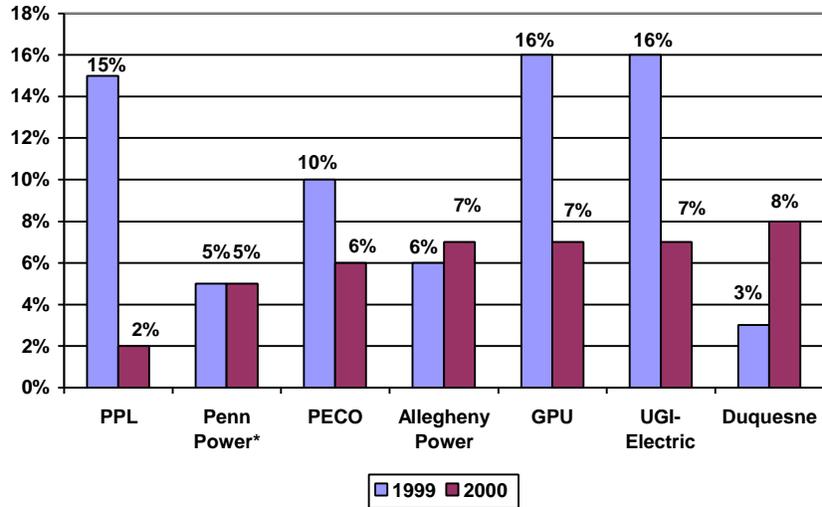


\*Duquesne was not able to report a busy-out rate for 1999. The 1999 report erroneously presented this statistic as 0% for Duquesne.

In conformance with the Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards, the EDCs are to report to the Commission the average busy-out rate for each call center, business office, or both. The regulation defines busy-out rate as the number of calls to a call center that receive a busy signal divided by the total number of calls that are received at a call center. For example, an EDC with a 10 percent average busy-out rate means that 10 percent of the customers who attempted to call the company received a busy signal (and thus did not gain access) while 90% of the customer calls were received by the company. If the EDC has more than one call center, it is to supply the busy-out rates for each center as well as a combined statistic for the EDC as a whole. The chart above presents the combined busy-out rate for each major EDC during 1999 and 2000.

The 2000 results show that PPL was able to improve telephone access to its call centers after the company's new computer system was fully integrated into the call center operations. As a result, the company's busy-out rate decreased significantly from 1999 to 2000. PECO's average busy-out rate, as shown above, also improved from 1999 to 2000. The company discovered that it had miscounted its busy-out messages in 1999. By correcting this error in 2000, PECO reported a busy-out rate of .2%, reported above as 0%, for the year 2000. UGI-Electric also reduced its busy-out rate from 1999 to 2000. Penn Power reported that its busy-out rate increased from 1999 to 2000 due to outages and storms that caused extremely heavy call volumes in four months of 2000. Duquesne attributes its 2000 level to the results of severe storms. According to Duquesne's report, customers received busy signals when calling the company on just four days in 2000.

## Call Abandonment Rate



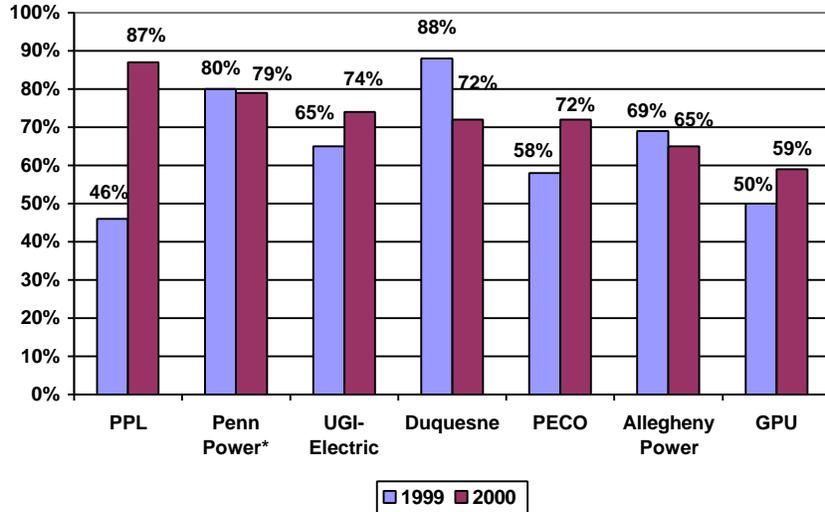
\*Penn Power's telecommunications package is not able to count calls as "abandoned" until after the call has been "received" (in a queue waiting to speak to a representative) for more than 30 seconds. Thus, calls abandoned before 30 seconds have elapsed are not included in this figure. Statistics for the other EDCs include all abandoned calls.

In conformance with the Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards, the EDCs are to report to the Commission the average call abandonment rate for each call center, business office, or both. The regulation defines call abandonment rate as the number of calls to an EDC's call center that were abandoned divided by the total number of calls that the EDC received at its call center or business office. For example, an EDC with a 10% call abandonment rate means that 10% of the calls received were terminated by the customer prior to speaking to an EDC representative. As the time that customers spend "on hold" increases, customers have a greater tendency to hang up, thus, the call abandonment rates increase. If the EDC has more than one call center, it is to supply the call abandonment rates for each center as well as a combined statistic for the EDC as a whole. The chart above presents the combined call abandonment rate for each major EDC during 1999 and 2000.

The above statistics illustrate that PPL, UGI-Electric and GPU significantly reduced their call abandonment rates from 1999 to 2000. PPL reported that its improvement was a result of the stabilization of its new information and work process improvements at its customer contact center. UGI noted that Hurricane Floyd had negatively impacted the 1999 statistics, as did unexpected reductions in staffing levels. The absence of major storm disruptions and stable staffing levels in 2000 resulted in

improved telephone access statistics for UGI-Electric. GPU employees began to gain proficiency with the company's new computer system and thus telephone access began to improve in the early part of the past year as compared with 1999. However, the company reported that a steady attrition of experienced call center employees caused performance to decline in mid-year.

### Percent of Calls Answered Within 30 Seconds



\*Penn Power's telecommunications package is not able to distinguish the difference between an answered call and an abandoned call until the call has been "received" (in queue waiting to speak to a representative) for more than 30 seconds. As a result, this statistic represents calls that were answered and/or abandoned within 30 seconds. Statistics for the other EDCs represent answered calls only.

According to Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards at §54.153, each EDC is to "take measures necessary and keep sufficient records" to report the percent of calls answered within 30 seconds or less at the company's call center. The section specifies that "answered" means that an EDC representative is ready to render assistance to the caller. An acknowledgement that the consumer is on the line does not constitute an answer. If an EDC operates more than one call center (a center for handling billing disputes and a separate one for making payment arrangements, for example), the EDC is to provide separate statistics for each call center and a statistic that combines performance for all the call centers. The chart above presents the combined percent of calls answered within 30 seconds for each of the major EDCs in Pennsylvania during 1999 and 2000.

The 2000 results give evidence of improved access for PPL, UGI-Electric, PECO and GPU. Duquesne and GPU both noted that the attrition of experienced call center representatives affected telephone access performance negatively. GPU's percent of calls answered within 30 seconds improved dramatically in the early part of the year as customer service representatives gained experience and proficiency working with the company's new computer system. In mid-year, however, a reduction in staff resulted in declining performance thereafter.

### **Billing**

According to the Standards and Billing Practices for Residential Utility Service (Chapter 56, Section 11), a utility is to render a bill once every billing period to every residential ratepayer. The customer bill is extremely important to customers in that it is often the only communication between the company and a customer. An EDC must be able to produce and send this very fundamental statement to customers at regular intervals. The failure of a customer to receive a bill each month frequently generates consumer complaints to the EDC and sometimes to the Commission. It also adversely affects collections performance.

#### **Number and Percent\* of Residential Bills Not Rendered Once/Billing Period**

Company	1999		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Duquesne</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Penn Power</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>UGI-Electric</b>	<b>N/A**</b>	<b>N/A**</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>.01%</b>
<b>Allegheny Power</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>.01%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>.01%</b>
<b>GPU</b>	<b>1,089</b>	<b>.12%</b>	<b>1,631</b>	<b>.18%</b>
<b>PPL</b>	<b>7,307</b>	<b>.68%</b>	<b>3,082</b>	<b>.28%</b>
<b>PECO</b>	<b>8,033</b>	<b>.47%</b>	<b>8,056</b>	<b>.47%</b>

\*12-month average

\*\*The Public Utility Commission granted a temporary waiver of this reporting requirement to UGI-Electric and thus, the company did not supply this data for 1999.

The Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards require the EDCs to report the number and percent of residential bills that the EDC failed to render in accordance with the Chapter 56 provision. The above table presents the average monthly percent of residential bills that each major EDC failed to render once every billing period during 1999 and 2000.

As with the telephone access statistics, PPL's 1999 data reflected the problems that its new computer system generated. This EDC was able to improve performance in 2000. GPU continued to experience difficulty in producing bills for residential customers until the last two months of 2000 when the number of unbilled accounts decreased. GPU attributes this improvement to its customer accounting department becoming fully functional in October 2000. PECO's performance was stable from 1999 to 2000. PECO reports that it expects to improve its performance as it moves forward with its automated meter reading project. The lack of meter readings is often responsible for PECO's inability to produce bills on time.

**Number and Percent\* of Bills to Small Commercial Customers Not Rendered Once/Billing Period**

Company	1999		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Duquesne	0	0%	0	0%
Penn Power	9.7	0%	0	0%
UGI-Electric	N/A**	N/A**	0.75	.01%
Allegheny Power	58	.07%	92	.12%
GPU	174	.15%	560	.50%
PPL	2,681	1.87%	2,240	1.40%
PECO	2,838	1.57%	3,009	1.66%

\*12-month average

\*\*The Public Utility Commission granted a temporary waiver of this reporting requirement to UGI-Electric and thus, the company did not supply this data for 1999.

In accordance with 66 Pa.C.S. § 1509, all utility customers are to be permitted to receive bills monthly. The Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards require the EDCs to report the number and percent of small commercial bills that the EDC failed to render in accordance with this provision. The above regulation defines a small business customer as a person, sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, association or other business that receives electric service under a small commercial, small industrial or small business rate classification. In addition, the maximum registered peak load for the small business customer must be less than 25 kilowatt hours within the last 12 months.

The above table presents the average monthly percent of bills to small commercial customers that each major EDC failed to render once every billing period during 1999 and 2000. As with residential bills, PPL's new computer system produced many billing problems involving small commercial customers in 1999, including the inability to render bills each month. PPL attributes its improvement in 2000 to the stabilization of this system.

PECO reported that computer-programming failures over-reported the numbers of bills not rendered for small commercial customers during 1999 and 2000. However, PECO acknowledges that meter reading problems in November resulted in high numbers of bills not being rendered in December 2000. As with residential bills, PECO anticipates improvement in this area as more customers have meters that can be read automatically.

### Meter Reading

Regular meter reading is important to produce accurate bills for customers who expect to receive bills based on the amount of service they have used. The concern that regular meter reading may be one of the customer service areas where EDCs might reduce service under electric competition was responsible for the following measures being included in the reporting requirements. The Commission's experience is that the lack of actual meter readings generates large numbers of complaints to companies, as well as to the Commission. The reporting requirements include three measures of meter reading performance that correspond with the meter reading requirements of the Chapter 56 regulations.

#### Number and Percent\* of Residential Meters Not Read By Company or Customer in Six Months

Company	1999		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Penn Power</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>.000%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.001%</b>
<b>Allegheny Power</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>.030%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>.001%</b>
<b>PPL</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>.004%</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>.004%</b>
<b>UGI-Electric</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>.004%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>.005%</b>
<b>Duquesne</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>.010%</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>.028%</b>
<b>GPU</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>.057%</b>	<b>1,322</b>	<b>.139%</b>
<b>PECO</b>	<b>6,229</b>	<b>.340%</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>.806%</b>

\*12-month average

According to Chapter 56, Section 12(4)(ii), an EDC may estimate the bill of a residential ratepayer if EDC personnel are unable to gain access to obtain an actual meter reading. However, at least every 6 months, the EDC must obtain an actual meter reading or ratepayer supplied reading to verify that the estimated readings are accurate. The Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards require EDCs to report the number and percent of residential meters for which they have failed to comply with this section of Chapter 56.

GPU attributes the increase in meters not read in 2000 to its new computer system and the system's reporting capabilities. Performance improved in the latter months of 2000 and GPU expects continued improvement. PECO attributes its increased numbers to its redirection of resources from reading meters to installing meters that can be read automatically. PECO expects the long term result of this strategy will be the elimination of meters that have not been read in accordance with Chapter 56 requirements.

**Number and Percent\* of Residential Meters Not Read  
In Twelve Months**

Company	1999		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Penn Power</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>.000%</b>
<b>Allegheny Power</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>.01%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>.001%</b>
<b>PPL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>.001%</b>
<b>UGI Electric</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.002%</b>
<b>Duquesne</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>.006%</b>
<b>GPU</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>.01%</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>.048%</b>
<b>PECO</b>	<b>3,864</b>	<b>.21%</b>	<b>6,521</b>	<b>.350%</b>

\*12-month average

According to Chapter 56, Section 12 (4)(iii), a company may estimate the bill of a residential ratepayer if company personnel are unable to gain access to obtain an actual meter reading. However, at least once every 12 months, the company must obtain an actual meter reading to verify the accuracy of either the estimated or ratepayer supplied readings. The Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards require the EDCs to report the number and percent of residential meters for which they fail to meet the requirements of this section.

As indicated on the previous page, GPU attributes the increase in number of residential meters not read to problems associated with its new computer system. PECO reported that its focus on installing meters that can be read automatically caused an increase in the number of residential meters not read. PECO believes that this focus will significantly reduce the number of unread meters in future years.

**Number and Percent\* of Residential Remote Meters  
Not Read in Five Years**

Company	1999		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>GPU</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Penn Power</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>UGI-Electric</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Duquesne</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>.003%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>PECO</b>	<b>483**</b>	<b>21%**</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Allegheny Power***</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>PPL***</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

\*12-month average

\*\*6-month average. PECO was unable to supply these numbers for the first six months of 1999.

\*\*\*No remotely read meters

According to Chapter 56 regulations, a utility may render a bill on the basis of reading from a remote reading device. However the utility must obtain an actual meter reading at least once every five years to verify the accuracy of the remote reading device. Under the quality of service reporting requirements, the EDCs must report to the Commission the number and percent of residential remote meters for which it failed to obtain an actual meter reading under the timeframe described in Chapter 56.

**Response to Disputes**

When a ratepayer advises a utility that he or she disputes any matter covered by Chapter 56 regulations, each utility covered by the regulations must issue its report to the complaining party within 30 days of the initiation of the dispute. A complaint or dispute filed with a company is not necessarily a negative indicator of service quality. However, a company's failure to promptly respond to the customer's complaint is an indication of poor service. Further, to respond beyond the 30-day limit is an infraction of Chapter 56 and the cause of complaints to the Commission.

**Number of Residential Disputes That Did Not  
Receive a Response within 30 Days**

<b>Company</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Penn Power</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>UGI-Electric</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Duquesne</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PECO</b>	<b>2,125</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>GPU</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>Allegheny Power</b>	<b>N/A*</b>	<b>675</b>
<b>PPL</b>	<b>4,023**</b>	<b>2,374</b>

\*The Commission granted Allegheny Power a temporary waiver of the section that requires reporting this statistic. Allegheny Power did not report this information for 1999. The company did submit this data for 2000.

\*\*This number was revised from last year's report based on new information supplied by PPL.

The Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards at 54.153(4) require each EDC to report to the Commission the actual number of disputes for which the company did not provide a response as required under the Chapter 56 regulations, in other words, not within 30 days.

PECO attributes its significant decrease as indicated in the above table to changes it made in handling billing inquiries from customers. Billing inquiries comprise the vast majority of disputes to the company. PPL also reduced the number of customer disputes not handled in the required 30 days. However, PPL notes that it is taking steps to reduce this number even further.

## 2. Customer Transaction Survey Results

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In conformance with the Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards, the EDCs are to report to the Commission the results of telephone transaction surveys of customers who have had interactions with the EDC. The purpose of the transaction surveys is to assess the customer's perception regarding this recent interaction. The regulations specify that the survey questions are to measure access to the company, employee courtesy, employee knowledge, promptness of the EDC response or visit, timeliness of the EDC response or visit and satisfaction with the handling of the interaction.

The EDCs must carry out the transaction survey process using survey questionnaires and procedures that provide the Commission with uniform data that can be used to directly compare customer service performance among Pennsylvania's EDCs. A survey working group composed of EDC representatives and PUC staff designed the survey questionnaire and survey procedures.

After serious and lengthy discussions, the working group decided that the focus of the surveys should be on residential and small commercial customers who have recently contacted their EDC. The working group decided that industrial customers and large commercial customers should not be included in the survey since these large customers have specific representatives within their respective EDCs with whom they discuss any problems, concerns, and issues and thus should be excluded from the survey. The survey sample also excludes all transactions that result from company outbound calling programs or other correspondence. However, transactions from consumers who use an EDC's automated telephone system exclusively, as well as those who contact their EDCs by personal visit are eligible to be surveyed.

In 2000, six of the major EDCs used a common survey company to conduct the survey and compile the results of interviews. Technical limitations precluded the seventh company from using this survey company to conduct the survey of its customers. This EDC used a different independent research firm to conduct the survey and compile the results. However, the EDC used the same sampling and other survey procedures as well as the same questionnaire as the other EDCs. The EDCs agree that the Commission and others can use the survey results to directly compare EDC customer service performance.

In January 2000, the survey research firms began conducting the surveys. Each month throughout the year the EDCs randomly selected a sample of transaction records for consumers who had contacted the company within the past 30 days. The EDC transmitted the sample lists to the research firms. The research firms randomly selected individual consumers from the sample lists. The survey firms contacted individual

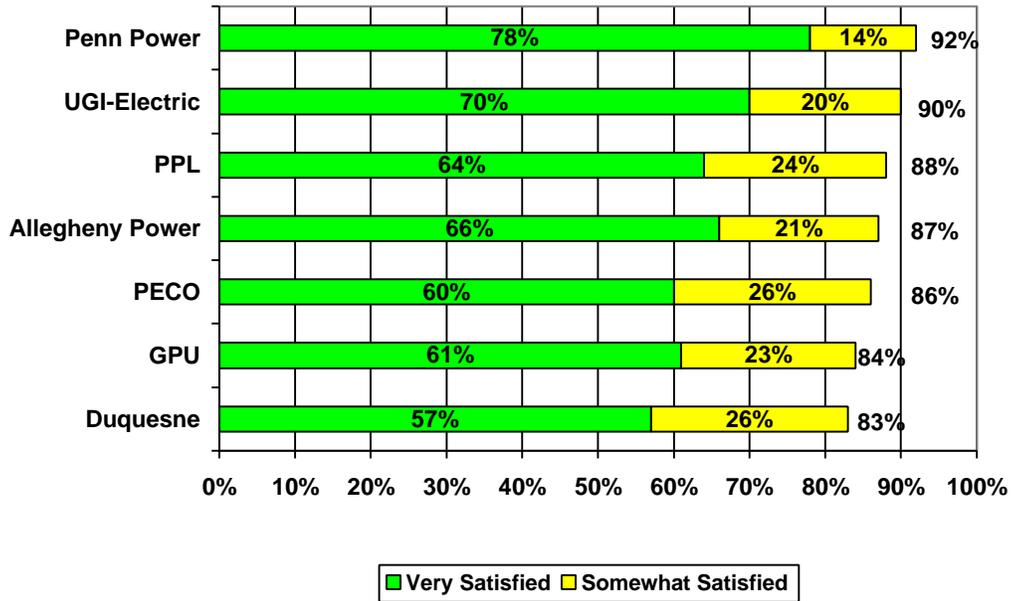
consumers in the sample until it met a monthly quota of completed surveys for each EDC.

The survey firms completed approximately 700 surveys for each EDC in 2000. With a sample of this size, there is a 95 percent probability that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 5 percentage points of what the results would be if all customers who had contacted their EDCs had been surveyed. Thus, the sampling plan meets the requirement of §54.154(5) that specifies that the results must be statistically valid within plus or minus 5%.

Survey working group members agreed that the 700 completed surveys should include 200 contacts about credit and collection issues and 500 contacts about all other types of issues. Under this plan, the credit/collection contacts do not dominate survey results. Credit and collection contacts are from customers who need to make payment arrangements, customers who had received termination notices, those who had their service terminated and others with payment problems. Contacts about other issues include calls about billing questions and disputes, installation of service requests, metering problems, outage reporting, questions about participating in Choice and a variety of other reasons.

The market research firms sent the first reports on survey results to the Commission in September 2000. These reports contained survey results for the first six months of the year. In March 2001, the companies submitted the survey results for the last six months of 2000, as well as cumulative 12-month results. The survey results have produced several volumes of data. This report summarizes the 2000 data into the charts and tables that appear on the following pages. Appendix A provides additional survey data including information about the number and type of consumers who participated in the 2000 survey. “Don’t know” and “refused” responses to survey questions were removed from the analysis.

## Satisfaction With the Ease of Reaching the Company 2000

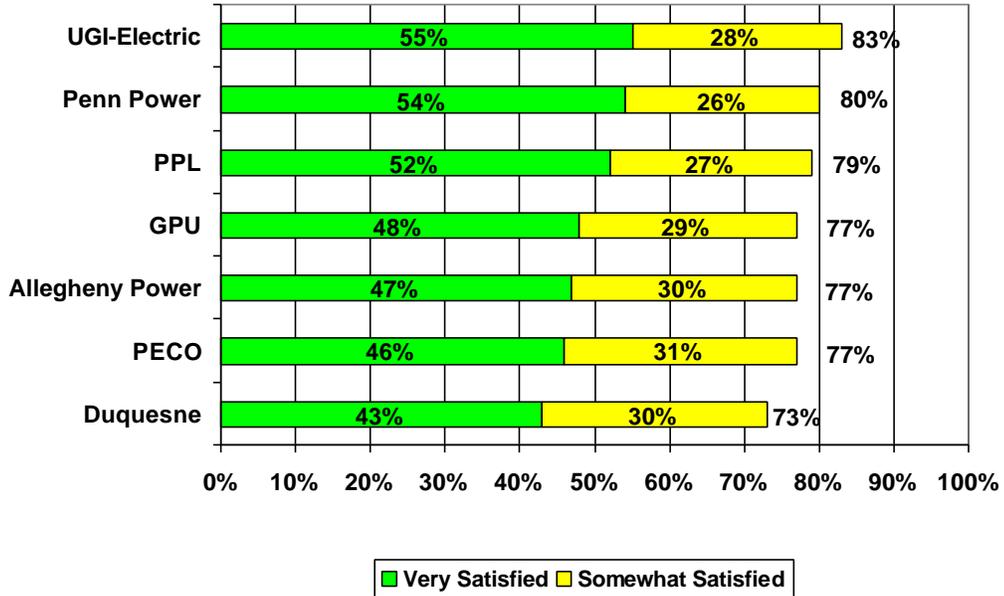


One of the first survey questions asks the consumer “How satisfied were you with the ease of reaching the EDC?” The bar chart above presents the percent of consumers who indicated satisfaction with the initial stage of their contact with the EDC. The Commission believes that an EDC should offer reasonable telephone access to its customers. Customers must be able to readily contact their company with questions, complaints, requests for service and to report service outages and other service problems. For 2000, the average of the percents of customers who responded that they were either “satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the ease of reaching the company is 87%.

Survey interviewers ask consumers other questions about the preliminary stages of their contact with the EDC. Since all the companies use an automated telephone system to filter calls and save time and money when dealing with consumer calls, the survey asks consumers several questions about their experience with using the EDC’s automated system. Table 1 in Appendix A presents the satisfaction results from questions about the ease of using the EDCs’ automated system and how well the choices offered by the telephone system fit the nature of the customer’s call. Table 4 in Appendix A shows the

percent of customers who indicated they had used their EDC's automated system. Table 1 in Appendix A also offers the 2000 satisfaction results from the question "How satisfied were you with the amount of time it took for you to speak with a company representative?" In 2000, the average percent of consumers who indicated they were either "satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with this wait is 85%. The chart that follows presents the level of satisfaction consumers expressed about using the EDCs' automated telephone systems.

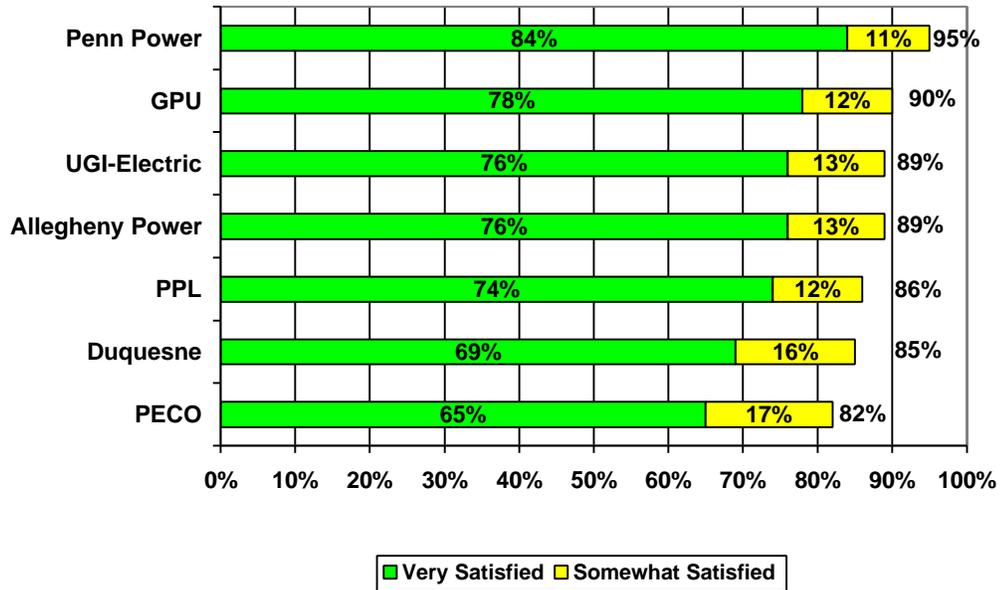
### Satisfaction with Using an EDC's Automated Phone System 2000



In many instances, when a customer contacts his or her EDC, the customer is first greeted by the company's automated telephone system. In some situations, the telephone system is able to satisfy the customer's reason for calling the company and the customer does not need to speak with a "live" representative. In other instances, the consumer must listen to a menu of selections and make choices before being able to speak with a company representative. The chart above illustrates the percent of customers who indicated they were satisfied with the experience of using the company's automated

telephone system. As mentioned earlier, Table 1 in Appendix A offers other findings about consumers' perceptions regarding the EDCs' automated systems.

### Satisfaction with EDC Representative's Handling of Contact 2000



As indicated in Appendix A, Table 4, an average of 91% of surveyed customers indicated that they had spoken with a company representative during their most recent interaction with the company. Each consumer who indicated that they had spoken with a company representative was asked the following question: "Thinking about your conversation, how satisfied were you with the way in which the company representative handled your contact?" The chart above presents the percent of customers who indicated satisfaction with the conversation they had with this company representative. This overall rating is most likely comprised of several components including the courtesy and knowledge of the representatives. The reporting requirements specify that the transaction survey questionnaire must measure consumers' perceptions of employee

courtesy and knowledge. The following table shows the consumers' ratings of these attributes of the company representatives with whom they interacted.

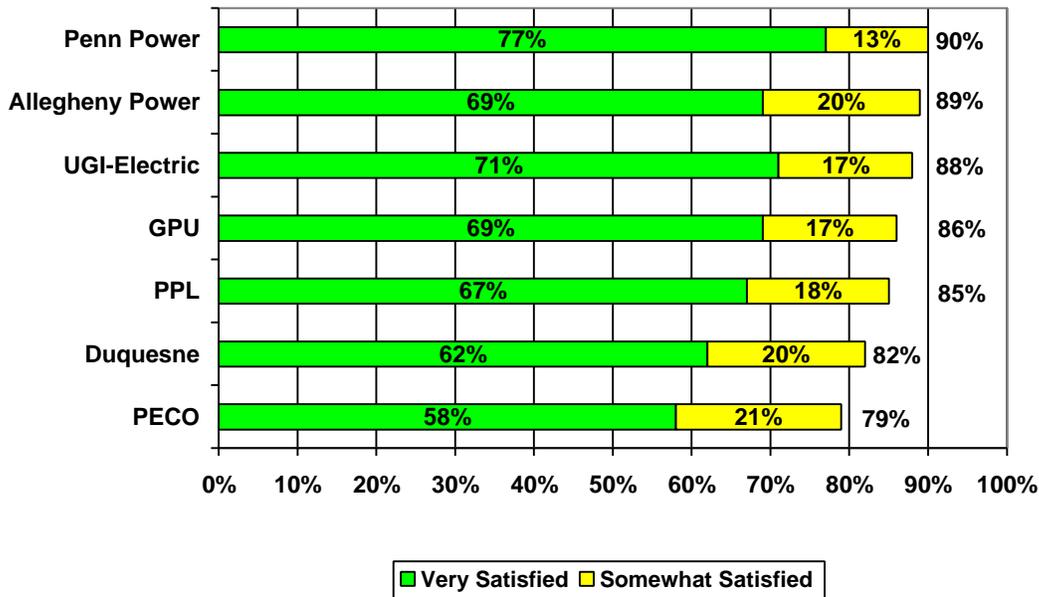
**Consumer Ratings of EDC Representatives  
2000**

Company	Call Center Representative's Courtesy		Call Center Representative's Knowledge	
	Somewhat Courteous	Very Courteous	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Very Knowledgeable
<b>Penn Power</b>	5%	93%	13%	82%
<b>Allegheny Power</b>	8%	88%	16%	77%
<b>UGI-Electric</b>	10%	83%	18%	76%
<b>GPU</b>	10%	85%	16%	75%
<b>PPL</b>	9%	85%	19%	73%
<b>Duquesne</b>	13%	78%	21%	67%
<b>PECO</b>	14%	77%	21%	66%
<b>Average</b>	10%	84%	18%	74%

As indicated above, on average 94% of consumers indicated that the company person they spoke with was either "very courteous" or "somewhat courteous" and an average of 91% rated the company representative as "very knowledgeable" or "somewhat knowledgeable."

Consumers who indicated that they had "field" visits from company representatives were also asked to rate the field representative on courtesy and knowledge. In addition, these consumers were given the opportunity to rate the field visit for promptness (the speed with which the EDC responded to the customer's need) and timeliness (acting at the agreed upon or promised time), as well as overall satisfaction with the visit. Only a relatively small percent of customers indicated that they had a premise visit from a company representative—a range of 11-26% of the various EDCs' consumers. The survey results of consumer perceptions regarding these visits appear in Table 2 of Appendix A.

## Overall Satisfaction with EDC Quality of Service 2000



Consumers most likely use a variety of factors to determine their overall level of satisfaction. The ease of reaching the company may be the beginning factor. Other factors might include the use of the company’s automated telephone system, the wait to speak to a company representative and the courtesy and knowledge of that representative. If a field visit is part of the interaction, this too would affect the consumer’s overall assessment. The chart above presents the results of the responses to the question, “Considering all aspects of this recent contact with the company, how satisfied were you with the quality of service provided by the company?” In 2000, the industry average showed that 86% of the customers were satisfied (68% very satisfied, 18% somewhat satisfied) with the overall quality of the service they received from their EDC’s.

As indicated in the introduction to the section on customer surveys, the EDCs and survey firms divided consumer contacts into credit and collection contacts and contacts about other matters. The working group members had expressed concern that the satisfaction level of consumers who had contacted the company about credit and

collection issues would negatively influence the overall satisfaction ratings. However, the opposite proved to be true in 2000. For all but one EDC, a greater percentage of customers who contacted the EDC about credit and collection issues responded that they were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” than the customers who contacted the EDC about other issues. Appendix A, Table 3 presents the level of satisfaction by these two categories of contacts as well as the overall satisfaction level for each of the EDCs.

In 2000, the Commission received EDC customer survey results for the first time. In April 2002, it will receive survey results for 2001. Next year’s report on EDC quality of service will present the new results as well as 2000 results.

## Conclusion

This report fulfills the Commission's responsibility to summarize the quality of service statistics that the EDCs reported to the Commission. The EDCs will continue to report data annually to the Commission. The telephone access, billing, meter reading and dispute data is due to the Commission on February 1 of each year. On April 1 of each year, the Commission is to receive the results of the customer surveys conducted during the previous year. Next year's report will offer two years of survey data and three years of telephone access, billing, meter reading, and customer dispute data.

The BCS report, *Utility Consumer Activities Report and Evaluation*, will again provide statistics associated with consumer complaints and payment arrangement requests filed with the Commission by the customers of the major EDCs.

The Commission uses three sources of data to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the quality of customer service experienced by customers of the major EDCs. The first source is the EDC itself that reports telephone access statistics, number of bills not rendered monthly to residential and commercial customers, meters not read according to Chapter 56 regulations, and disputes not handled within 30 days. The second source of data is drawn from the consumer complaints and payment arrangement requests filed with the Commission by the customers of the EDCs. Finally, the Commission uses the results the surveys of EDC customers who have had customer-initiated contacts with the EDCs. This latter source of information tells the Commission about the ease of contacting the companies, the customers' view of the knowledge and courtesy of the companies' customer service representatives, as well as the customers' overall satisfaction with the way the company handled the contacts.

All this information allows the Commission to monitor the quality of the EDCs' customer service performance. As the Commission fulfills its responsibility to ensure that the level of service quality provided to customers does not deteriorate under competition, it will move toward the establishment of benchmarks and standards regarding the various measures presented in this report. The establishment of benchmarks and standards for performance will be the subject of a separate proceeding. In the meantime, the Commission will keep close watch on the data drawn from its various sources of information regarding this important aspect of EDC performance.

# Appendix A

## Table 1

### Contacting an EDC

<b>Company</b>	<b>Ease of Using EDC's Automated Telephone System*</b>	<b>Satisfaction w/Choices offered by Automated Telephone System**</b>	<b>Satisfaction w/Wait to Speak to an EDC Representative**</b>
<b>Allegheny Power</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>84%</b>
<b>Duquesne</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>GPU</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>84%</b>
<b>PECO</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>Penn Power</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>PPL</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>84%</b>
<b>UGI-Electric</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>85%</b>

\*Percent of customers who answered "very easy to use" or "somewhat easy to use" when asked how easy it was to use the EDC's automated telephone system.

\*\*Percent of customers who answered either "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" to questions about how well the choices of the automated telephone system fit the nature of the customer's call and how satisfied they were with the amount of time it took to speak to a company representative.

## Appendix A

**Table 2**

### Premise Visit from an EDC Field Representative

Company	Overall Satisfaction w/Way Premise Visit Handled*	Satisfaction that Work Completed Promptly*	Field Rep's Courtesy**	Field Rep's Knowledge**	Field Rep's Respect For Property**	Satisfaction that Work Completed in a Timely Manner*
<b>Allegheny Power</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Duquesne</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>GPU</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>PECO</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>Penn Power</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>88%</b>
<b>PPL</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>UGI-Electric</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>85%</b>

\*percent of consumers who answered either “very satisfied or “somewhat satisfied” when asked how satisfied they were with this aspect of the field visit

\*\*percent of consumers who described the company field representative as “very courteous” or “somewhat courteous”; “very knowledgeable” or “somewhat knowledgeable” and “very respectful” or “somewhat respectful” when asked about their perceptions about various aspects of the field representative’s visit to the consumer’s home or property

## Appendix A

Table 3

### Overall Satisfaction: Credit/Collection Calls v. Other Calls

Company	Credit/Collection	Other	Overall
Allegheny Power	95%	86%	89%
Duquesne	83%	81%	82%
GPU	89%	84%	86%
PECO	81%	78%	79%
Penn Power	95%	88%	90%
PPL	84%	85%	85%
UGI-Electric	91%	87%	88%
Average	88%	84%	86%

\*“Other calls” include all categories of contacts to an EDC other than those related to credit and collection. Other calls include contacts about trouble or power outages, billing matters, connect/disconnect requests, customer choice and miscellaneous issues such as requests for rate information or name and address changes.

## Appendix A

Table 4

### Characteristics of Survey Participants 2000

<b>EDC</b>	<b>Consumers Surveyed</b>	<b>% Residential Consumers</b>	<b>% Commercial Consumers</b>	<b>% Who Used EDC's Automated Phone System</b>	<b>% Who Spoke with a Company Representative</b>	<b>% Who Needed a Premise Visit</b>
<b>Allegheny Power</b>	705	93%	7%	81%	88%	15%
<b>Duquesne Light</b>	702	97%	3%	76%	87%	20%
<b>GPU</b>	704	98%	2%	81%	94%	15%
<b>PECO</b>	703	95%	5%	76%	96%	26%
<b>Penn Power</b>	708	99%	1%	49%	88%	11%
<b>PPL</b>	710	98%	2%	78%	88%	11%
<b>UGI-Electric</b>	707	95%	5%	70%	98%	20%
<b>Average</b>	706	96%	4%	73%	91%	17%