

UPDATES

UPDATE ON ENERGY COSTS

Occasionally people will ask how the solar is doing and whether it is paying off. I usually answer vaguely, that yes, it is making a significant difference in our energy costs, especially in these peak months of May, June, July, and August, when the sun is at its highest and we have the longest hours of daylight.

I finally tabulated the cost of the Southern California Edison bills for the last 12 months and the 12 months prior to that (2 years total). I included the Southwest Gas bills for those same two years, and also the bills for the Wash n Shop. Here are the results of my tabulation, in dollars and cost per therm or per kilowatt hour (KWH):

<u>SCE</u>	<u>2015-16</u> (July to June)	<u>2016-17</u> (July to June)	<u>Savings</u>
Market	\$111,514 (16.8¢/KWH)	\$58,212 (14.6¢/KWH)	\$53,302
Wash n Shop	\$1,661 (15.8¢/KWH)	\$1,341 (19.3¢/KWH)	\$320
<u>SW Gas</u>			
Market	\$28,477 (91.5¢/therm)	\$26,931 (86.1¢/therm)	\$1546
Wash n Shop	\$10,750 (1.13¢/therm)	\$11,052 (1.12¢/therm)	-\$302
<u>Total Savings</u>	<u>SCE</u> \$54,848		
	<u>SWGAs</u> \$18		

(By the way, I don't understand "therms" or "KWH" other than to say that they are some sort of unit of measure of heat produced or of power consumed. Duhhhh.)

These figures reflect many factors that make it difficult to compare apples to apples. For instance,

1. The gas bill really should be higher than it is if we had run the Cummins natural gas generator 24/7 for the entire period, as we planned to do. But that hasn't worked out due to a number of failures that the Cummins company has been very slow to fix, so some months it has been fully operational, some months not at all, and some months we ran it 6 hours/day. We have not been able to figure out whether it's better to run the generator more and use SCE less, or run the generator less and use SCE more.

2. Somewhere in the middle of that period, Southwest Gas put us on a Small Power Generation rate, which is slightly lower than the rate



we were on before.

3. Somewhere in the middle of that period, SCE put the store, but not the laundry, on a Renewable

Energy rate, also slightly lower than it had been. (Very slightly!)

Regardless of all of the variables, we are glad for the savings of almost \$55,000. While the Cummins generator has been a pain in our backside, the solar has just

quietly sat there and produced energy as it should, so in this nasty state that has made conventional energy sources unaffordable, this is a good thing.

PRODUCT LINEUP CHANGES

Changes coming to our product lineup, again!

You can tell that I'm old when I refer to the "good old days", but so be it. I'm old and getting older fast. When we first started the store 42 years ago (!), in the "good old days", our wholesale supplier, Certified Grocers, was strong. There were many independent grocery stores for them to supply. Our private labels Springfield, Special Value, Prize (pet foods), and Golden Crème (milk and bread) were extensive, inexpensive, and good quality. We sold lots and lots of it.

In recent years, maybe as much as 10 years, independent markets have disappeared so that there are fewer and fewer like us – freestand-

ing, single-store operations. Now, in the independent world, there are 4 or 5 fair-sized Hispanic chains

like Vallarta and Cardenas, some upscale chains like Gelsons, and just a few stores like this one. Also the competitive landscape has changed drastically, so that there is a whole different mix

of stores where people can buy groceries: dollar stores, warehouse and wholesale stores, even drug stores. In some cases, the stores use groceries to bring people in to buy other items. In other cases, the chains leverage their size and geographic reach to beat down manufacturers and force them to conform to their demands.

As a result, Unified Grocers has itself faced challenges in competing against these different types of stores as they negotiate pricing in our behalf. They have not been able to keep us competitive in some things, and they have not been able to keep the independent, primarily Hispanic, chains to support our Springfield line, so it is a fight to maintain good selection and pricing.

Over the last 3 months or so, we have watched as our wholesaler, once Certified Grocers, then Unified Grocers, sold itself to a larger wholesaler based in Minnesota, SuperValu. There really was no choice given the changes described above, not to mention changes in the way the younger

generations think and behave. So now we are supplied by SuperValu, and have been for only a couple of weeks. It's hard to adjust.

We have no idea yet what effect this will have on this store and therefore you all. Will SuperValu negotiate for better pricing since they are so much larger than Unified was? Will they have access to more of the kinds of items you our customers want?

The one thing we do know is that our new brands that we have had for just under a year -- Top Care health and beauty items, Tippy Toes baby items, Simply Done non-food items – will go away over the next few months due to a conflict between Topco, the owner of those brands, and SuperValu. We don't know yet what will replace it, although we are assured that

something as-good-as or better is on the way.

It's a little scary, sitting in the dark, hoping for the best, especially because it impacts you whom we are committed to serve. One thing you can count on: we are inputting with all of our might to be sure

we get the very best for you, and that we go forward and not backward. Stay tuned...

Linda Gammel

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Contributed. From the Web.

JUST REMEMBER

An older gentleman was on the operating table awaiting surgery and he insisted that his son, a renowned surgeon, perform the operation.

As he was about to get the anesthesia, he asked to speak to his son.

"Yes, Dad, what is it?"

"Don't be nervous, son; do your best, and just remember, if it doesn't go well, if something happens to me, your mother is going to come and live with you and your wife."



**TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THOSE WHO SPONSOR THIS STORE;
SEE <http://thenewlight.net>**

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

LVEDA Meeting

(Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association)

**TUES. AUGUST 1, 5 PM.
at the Senior Center**

- Editor Steve Hunt to present the future of the leader - and how the community can participate.
- Final comments on the County's Renewable Energy and Conservation Element (RECE).
- Present draft of Lucerne Valley's Community Plan.
- Update on our "Sunshot Initiative" for a community solar project.
- Responses to the Ord Mt. Solar (MextEra) and Calcite Substation projects.
- Status of the 8MinuteEnergy project.
- Proposed BLM/State Lands exchanges - and potential for more solar projects.
- Code enforcement issues.

SERVICES AT CROSSROADS CENTER

LUCERNE VALLEY MARKET & HARDWARE

248-7311

WASH N SHOP COIN LAUNDRY

248-7311

FIRST MOUNTAIN BANK

248-2717

DR. ASHOK MELVANI M.D.

248-1070

ECHO RECYCLING

760-617-5407

On the north side of the store.

AT THE SERVICE COUNTER

In the store

- COPIES • FAX SERVICE
- PACKAGE EXPRESS -- UPS only
- PAYMENT STATION SCE, Frontier & Verizon

PRESCRIPTION DELIVERY

242-4900

Rancho Drugs - Tues. 11AM, Wed. & Fri. 3PM

LIMITS Please, unless otherwise indicated, **ON AD ITEMS NO MORE THAN 6 TOTAL** (including all flavors or varieties) **OF ANY ITEM, PER FAMILY, DURING THE AD PERIOD, AT THE SALE PRICE**, except in produce and meat, which are limited to normal retail quantities, or which carry limits specifically stated. Sorry, we must reserve the right to further limit or refuse sales.

ECHO RECYCLING
760-617-5404

On the Northeast side of the parking lot.

Open Mon. - Sat. 9AM - 4PM

Closed for Lunch Noon to 1PM.

Closed Sunday

New! Special Prices

Aluminum CRV \$1.80/lb

#1 Plastic CRV \$1.20/lb

Offer and pricing good thru July 26, 2017