

NEAN Energy Assistance Committee Meeting Minutes October 1, 2009

Attendees: Judi Martin, Laura Demman, DeVonne Ksiazkiewicz, Lori St. Aubin, Jeremy Coffey, Ardith Hoins, Carol Fritzler and Mike Kelly.

1. Minutes were accepted from the September conference call. Judi will follow up by contacting Kate at Red Cross about sending a notice of the Energy Assistance Committee meetings to Kate's sources in Omaha. Judi also will contact Roger and Shirley from Energy Education about working on a speaker's bureau to present information across the state.
2. There was a discussion about the "Faces of Energy" that is included at the bottom of this note. This is a two-part project. Part one would be to find people across the US to share an individual's stories in regards to their need for energy assistance and their experience in receiving the assistance. Part two is to set up a resource that would be available to the media on agencies that would have funds available to help individuals. This is much like what NEAN is doing in setting up a site that individuals can access to see if there are agencies where they live that could help them with their utility costs. One warning was that it is extremely important to have a signed release by the individual prior to anyone providing names, phone numbers, etc. for the media to contact in regards to "Faces of Energy." I do know there have been plenty of media requests for this type of information over the years. I have seen the news items utility providers offer usually come out on the short end when someone will say "so and so turned by gas/electricity off and would not turn them back on until I paid \$1,200. And they only gave me \$150 towards that bill. I had to go to several other places for assistance to meet the total bill." This also has happened to DHHS that someone owed \$1,200 and we would only pay \$750 of the bill.
3. We talked about the Energy Summit Meeting for 2009/2010 held by the Nebraska Energy Office September 30, 2009. There were reports in regards to predictions on weather for the upcoming winter, utility costs, help that can be provided by utility companies, their shut-off policies, DHHS assistance and NEAN. Laura took great notes and will provide the bullet points from the meeting.
4. We will make a request at the quarterly meeting that any NEAN members who have programs to help individuals with their utilities be prepared to make a report starting with the first meeting of the new year with the numbers of households that were assisted and the total dollars spent. This will hopefully coincide with year-end reports and then members may have quarterly information available in the following quarterly meetings.
5. There was a small discussion on the data collection form. Some providers want a signed agreement to provide this information and other providers would rather provide the information but not have a signed form. There will be a discussion October 7 in regards to this issue.
6. There is an e-mail process for local DHHS to contact Source Gas and Lincoln Electric System to get either payment history or to guarantee/pledge a payment and for the provider to respond back to DHHS. At this moment – M.U.D., OPPD and Black Hills have to receive faxes and send faxes for the same information. We are getting close to have this e-mail process set up to use with M.U.D., OPPD and Black Hills (we are attempting to have as many workers as possible use the website process – but if not, there would be an e-mail process) so we can stop the fax process. As soon as we work that out for M.U.D., OPPD and Black Hills, we will work with NPPD and NorthWest to set up the same process. Then we will attempt to set that process up with as many other providers who receive energy payments from DHHS. This will be an ongoing process but if we can get Source, LES, M.U.D., OPPD, Black Hills, NPPD and NorthWestern involved with this process, it will probably meet the needs for 85% of the payments sent to utility providers. I would prefer to not discuss this matter October 7 unless it is brought up by someone outside of the Energy Assistance Committee. Plus, this is really an issue to be dealt with by each provider and DHHS.
7. The committee discussed who would make the committee report at the NEAN meeting. DeVonne will organize an agenda and several committee members will participate.

Submitted by Mike Kelly.

**Energy Assistance Data Gathering Subcommittee Meeting
September 20, 2007, Omaha**

Attending:

OPPD: Judi Martin, Jennifer Johnston, Barb Gullie, Jean Chamberlain
Aquila: Jan Davis
NPPD: Roger Hunt, Mitch Beal
M.U.D.: Julie Thacker, Bill Rogers
Loup: Walt Williams
Source Gas: Char Reiman and Rhonda Jaeschke

Attached is copy of the agenda:

After welcome and introductions, a brief background was given on how NEAN was formed and our mission.

Overview of data collection models:

Attendees were informed of the efforts to review what other states are doing in collecting data

Addressing Concerns of collecting data:

We reviewed the draft protocol and discussed the need for an agreement that would be executed between NEAN and the utilities
This is something that NEAN will initiate.

Data gathering protocol

The protocol will be further edited as the process is further defined.

Categories of Data to collect:

The majority of the time was spent going through each category of data to clarify which utility has this information readily accessible. There were several questions concerning the LIHEAP customers that we will need Mike Kelly to help us with.

Judi will update the spread sheet that each utility will use and send. These categories may not be submitted by all utilities and if so, we will make note of this on any future reports. OPPD will work with United Way on a format that will dump all individual data into one file.

Follow-up items:

For the time being, we have tabled making the decision on the reporting time periods for 2008. We agreed to report 2007 data as yearly total and will decide at a later date if we will report monthly or quarterly beginning in 2008.

See attached spread sheet for data categories and availability of data.

Submitted by: Judi Martin