

National Fuel Funds Network

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Energy Safety Net Bulletin #152: Only three and a half weeks remain before the opening of the 2010 National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference in San Antonio June 14-16. The conference, which combines the membership of the NFFN and the National Low Income Energy Consortium, provides you with an excellent opportunity to participate in stimulating discussions, hear informed speakers, and network with other members of the energy assistance community.

Conference registration, as well as hotel reservations, are available on line at <<http://www.neuac.org>>. We ask that you act quickly because the discounted hotel rates end cannot be guaranteed after May 21. Register now. Don't miss your chance to participate in this important conference.

NEUAC Volunteers Needed: Attending the National Energy and Affordability Conference in San Antonio and want to help out? If so, the National Fuel Funds Network and National Low Income Energy Consortium, who co-present the conference, ask that you consider volunteering a few hours of your time for key conference tasks.

The success of the national conference depends on a volunteer staff of some 80 people. Volunteers monitor the sessions and collect evaluation forms, ensure workshop PowerPoint presentations are loaded and projectors are working, and assist with registration.

This year, NFFN and NLIEC need and welcome anyone who wants to help with these tasks. Volunteers may attend the workshop of one's choice and volunteer to distribute and collect evaluation forms. Or volunteers may agree to be a registration worker during morning rush and attend workshops afterward.

If you can help in San Antonio, please e-mail or call the NEUAC volunteer coordinator, Jamie Krause of TXU Energy at 512.349.6429 and/or <<mailto:jamie.krause@txu.com>>. Let her know if you'd like to volunteer for workshop monitor, registration or projection/power point work. Please visit <<http://www.neuac.org>>, to determine the workshop you want to attend and let Ms. Krause know. She will get back to you to confirm a volunteer placement.

Conference auction, raffle and promotional items sought: The National Energy and Utility

Conference seeks items for the NFFN Silent Auction, the conference raffle and promotional items to include in conferees' bags. Proceeds from the Silent Auction support the Networks' Sister Pat Kelley Travel Scholarship program for nonprofit NFFN members. Please visit <http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org/2010%20Auction-Gift%20Basket-Bag%20Request%20Letter%20-%20web.pdf> for information on how to contribute to the conference success with item donations.

Fuel Fund Actions: The number of fuel funds run by members of the Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy has grown from 4 in 2008 to 11 this year, according to David Rinebolt, the organization's executive director. Collectively the fuel funds administer \$7.7 million annually.

Rinebolt said the increase in the number of fuel funds is directly related to the OPAE's advocacy efforts before the state's Public Utility Commission. "Effective advocacy is the key to leveraging these resources," concluded Rinebolt. "The fact that we take no administrative funds for our efforts maximizes the assistance available to our clients."

Members of the OPAE include the AEP 2009 Fuel Fund, the Columbia Gas TECO Fuel Fund, Columbia Utility Crisis Fuel Funds I and II, the DP&L Fuel Fund, the Dominion East Ohio Fuel Fund, the Duke Electric Fuel Fund, the Duke Gas Fuel Fund, the FirstEnergy Fuel Fund, the OPEA/FirstEnergy Fuel Fund, and the Vectren Fuel Fund.

- The Salvation Army in Michigan has partnered with state propane provider Inergy Propane, LLC and its 30 vendors throughout the state to encourage their customers to donate their used propane tanks. Inergy Propane will recycle the tanks and donate all proceeds to The Salvation Army's utility assistance program. This special fund will provide critical home heating assistance to low-income propane customers statewide over the 2010-2011 winter.
- Demand for aid through the West Virginia Utility Assistance Program has increased by 81 percent since the program opened October 1, 2009, according to the program's director Danielle Snidow. The program helped more than 3,036 low-income West Virginia families maintain or restore utility service by providing more than \$782,626 in utility assistance grants.

Public Utilities Commission Actions: The Colorado Public Utilities Commission ordered Xcel Energy to continue to donate 100 percent of its residential late payment fees to Energy Outreach Colorado to be used for bill payment assistance for the company's low-income customers. The fees generate about \$5 to \$6 million in funds annually.

Xcel began charging its residential customers a 1 percent per month late payment fee in 2007, at which time the company was required by the commission to donate the entire amount to Energy Outreach until rates for the company's next rate case went into effect. This process was extended in the last two rate cases, and no expiration of the transfer of residential late payment fees to Energy Outreach was set in this most recent case.

Federal Legislation

- Senators John Kerry and Joe Lieberman introduced climate control legislation designed to reduce carbon emissions and lessen the country's dependence on oil. The complex legislation sets limits on carbon emissions in power plants, heavy industry and transportation and will sell emissions allowances. The revenue from those sales will be used to provide direct rebates, energy bill discounts, tax cuts and an energy refund program to consumers to lessen the impact of expected increases in energy prices. Although the House passed an energy and climate control bill last year, the prospects of the bills being approved by the Congress and sent to the president are slim, according to Capitol Hill sources.
- The NFFN is preparing a detailed examination of the legislation that will be available to our members next week. If you would like to read the text of the legislation visit <<http://kerry.senate.gov/americanpoweract/pdf/APAbill.pdf>>
- The House of Representatives passed and sent to the Senate legislation to provide homeowners with rebates for the purchase and installation of a variety of energy efficient home improvements. The Home Star Energy Retrofit Act would give rebates of up to \$3,000 per household for replacement windows, storm doors, insulation, replacement furnaces, air conditioning and water heaters.
- Legislation funding LIHEAP continues to move slowly through Congress. In the Senate, the Budget Committee has included \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP in the Chairman's mark. Appropriations subcommittees, in both the House and Senate, have held hearings on the legislation, however markups of the bills have not been scheduled.

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