



## *National Fuel Funds Network*

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### **Energy Safety Net Bulletin #109**

Dear Member: The NFFN's 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference last week in Nashville provided attendees with the unique opportunity to participate in a mass letter writing campaign designed to send a message directly to individual Congressional delegations urging them to use every legislative opportunity to provide additional funding for LIHEAP for this fiscal year.

The NFFN working with the National Energy Assistance Directors Association (NEADA), the American Gas Association, and the Campaign for Home Energy Assistance set up an area for signing an open letter to the Congressional leaders and provided several computers for preparing personal letters to individual Representatives and Senators.

The campaign generated over 170 signatures on the open letter and about 560 letters to individual legislators.

If you did not attend the conference or if you were in Nashville but didn't participate in this activity, there is still an opportunity to do so. Click on the following link – [http://www.bipac.net/issue\\_alert.asp?q=AGA&issue=Natural\\_Gas\\_UTILITY\\_Employee\\_for\\_LIHEAP&parent=AGA](http://www.bipac.net/issue_alert.asp?q=AGA&issue=Natural_Gas_UTILITY_Employee_for_LIHEAP&parent=AGA)

The link will direct you to AGA's "Capitol Voice" site, where you will be asked to input your personal information and will be matched to your Congressional delegation. The site will produce a prewritten template letter, which was prepared to assist you with your message. You will then have the opportunity to personalize the letter.

Once completed you have the option of printing or emailing the letter. If you choose to print the letter, please fax it to your Representatives and Senators before July 4<sup>th</sup>. If you need assistance with the letter-writing template, please call Vivian Lausevic of the American Gas Association at 202-824-7208.

## Annual Conference

- Some 230 NFFN members and supporters attended the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference in Nashville earlier this month. Attendees took part in more than two-dozen informative and educational workshops and hot topic sessions and much more.

Former Louisiana State University basketball coach turned motivational speaker Dale Brown brought conference attendees to their feet with a rousing address during which he urged NFFN members to “kick down the door” in the fight to provide additional funding for LIHEAP.

Dr. John Cook of the Boston University School of Medicine and co-author of a new study on the relationship between LIHEAP and the health of young children was the featured speaker at the annual awards luncheon.

During the awards ceremony, Mary Thompson Grassi of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority was presented with the NFFN’s highest honor, the Sister Pat Kelley Award.

The Victorine Q. Adams Award, which recognizes institutional innovation and achievement among nonprofit NFFN members was given to Energy Outreach Colorado’s for its Nonprofit Energy Efficiency Program (NEEP). NEEP provides funding for energy audits and energy efficiency improvements to nonprofit organizations serving low-income and at-risk populations.

The DTE Energy was named the recipient of the Corporate Excellence Award. Executive Vice President Jerry Norcia accepted for the company. The Network presented its Extra Mile Award for legislative achievement to Sen. Mark Pryor of Arkansas for his unwavering support of LIHEAP.

A more detailed report on the NFFN’s 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference will appear in the next issue of the “National Energy Assistance Report” and on the NFFN’s website – [www.nationalfuelfunds.org](http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org).

## LIHEAP

- The House Appropriations Subcommittee with jurisdiction over LIHEAP funding has provided \$2.6 billion for the federal energy assistance program for FY 2008. The subcommittee included \$1.98 billion in block grant funding and \$682 million in contingency funding.

The total amount is \$500 million more than the FY 2007 level for LIHEAP and \$800 million more than what the Bush Administration had requested. The full Appropriations Committee is expected to take up the bill when Congress returns from its July 4<sup>th</sup> recess.

## **Fuel Fund Activities**

- In Michigan, The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW) has announced that ZeeRamell Pace has been named interim executive director of the statewide energy assistance program following the resignation of Kathy Walgren.

Ms Pace has been THAW's program director for the past six years and was the driving force behind THAW's faith-based initiative. Prior to coming to THAW, Ms. Pace was the emergency assistance supervisor for DTE Energy.

Ms. Walgren is a former NFFN Board Chairperson. In 2006, she received NFFN's highest honor, the Sister Pat Kelley award.

## **State Government Actions**

- Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley has added \$5 million to the state's Electric Universal Service Program to provide additional energy assistance following a June 1 50 percent increase in electric rates by Baltimore Gas and Electric. Originally \$52 million had been set aside for the program for FY 2008.

According to the governor's office the additional funds would be made up of carryover money from last year's program, federal matches and other state Department of Human Resources funds.

- In Texas, advocates for seniors, the poor and the disabled have asked the state Public Utility Commission to impose a summer moratorium on electric utility cut-offs. Last summer, the Commission approved a moratorium that ran from August to October. A decision from the Commission is expected by early July.

In a separate action, TXU announced a voluntary moratorium on disconnections for low-income customers, those in critical care and people at least 62 years old.

## **Utility Actions**

- AmerenUE in St. Louis has announced that it will donate 350 window air conditioning units to five social service agencies and one health department in the utility's Missouri service territory.

The donated Energy Star air conditioners are part of AmerenUE's "Be Cool" air conditioner program and will go to Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis and the Urban League of St. Louis County; the Samaritan Center of Jefferson City; the East Missouri Action Agency in Park Hills and Potosi; Sts. Joachim and Ann

Care Service of St. Charles County; and the Jefferson County Health Department.

The units will be distributed to AmerenUE's low income and low-income elderly customers. Recipients will also receive an energy conservation kit, which includes information of weatherization and energy efficiency.

### **Reports and Studies**

- Entergy Corporation, which provides electricity in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi, has released a report that details the utility's initiatives for low-income customers during 2006.

The report pointed out that 25 percent of Entergy's 2.6 million customers fall below the federal poverty guidelines. According to the report, Entergy customers last year voluntarily contributed more than \$1.5 million to the company's bill payment assistance programs; employees contributed \$420,000 and shareholders another \$700,000 for a total of over \$2.4 million.

The complete report can be found at the utility's website – [www.entergy.com](http://www.entergy.com).