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Bulletin Board

*NFFN's LIHEAP Action Day – Washington, DC
February 10, 2010*

*National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference
Hyatt Regency San Antonio*

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National *Energy* Assistance Report

THE EFFORTS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

From the Chair



By *Sue Montgomery Corey*, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the National Fuel Funds Network and President of Community Power Network of New York State

It was February 1, 2006. The Washington air was cold – in spite of the blinding sun. We were there outside the Senate office buildings for NFFN's Action Day Press Conference.

Action Day is always an interesting experience. You never really know who you will run into wandering the halls of the Capitol and legislative office buildings. On this Action Day, NFFN was honored to have at its press conference the Lion of the Senate, Senator Ted Kennedy.

I don't remember the details of the Senator's remarks that day. But, I do remember the passion with which he spoke. He was impressive that day. Not just because he was a Senator. Not just because he had the Kennedy name and history. He was impressive that day because he was willing to lay his own humanity on the line and asked all of us to do the same. Together, he believed that we could do what it took to help our low-income neighbors stay safe and warm on that cold day.

Senator Kennedy also understood that the power of LIHEAP extended far beyond the northeast and his constituents. He supported efforts to fund LIHEAP at levels which allowed the program to be a more effective national resource. Low-income households in hot weather states have benefitted from the cooling assistance that came from that commitment.

Senator Kennedy never stopped being an advocate for the things that mattered. Right up to his death, he continued to advocate for those who needed his help. I am grateful for his fierce dedication to so many things that matter to so many people.

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When it Comes to LIHEAP, There's No Time to Rest!

Guest Editorial By *Jim Burke*, Chairman and CEO of TXU Energy

As summer wanes, 150,000 Texans and millions of other Americans are being helped by the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This is unprecedented.

LIHEAP helps qualified Americans pay a portion of their home energy bills, and in many instances also helps weatherize their homes. LIHEAP is vitally important. Despite these achievements, sustained or increased funding is never assured. It falls to us to work for it.

Although it appears that the recession may be nearing an end for some, it is still reverberating through millions of households. For the first time, many of these households had to look to LIHEAP for help. And, they found it.

Since its inception, LIHEAP has often been seen primarily as a winter heating assistance program. In fact, LIHEAP has the capacity to also deliver assistance in areas of the nation that get really hot, too. This is especially true when federal appropriations for the core program are substantial, as it has been in 2009, and now appears to be likely again in 2010. LIHEAP has become increasingly effective in this time of great need— regardless of whether someone lives in a hot or cold climate.

In Texas, typical summer temperatures make cooling just as critical as heating elsewhere in the country, so LIHEAP operates as a cooling program for Texans. Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and New Mexico have similar arrangements, while Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee have year-round programs.

Funding LIHEAP in fiscal 2010 with at least last years funding level (\$5.1 billion) will help those in need across the nation. This level of funding allows support of cooling programs and provides for a better-balanced distribution of funds nationally. If funding drops, this equilibrium can be lost, and the burden falls on the

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From the Chair (continued from page 1)

Here in the Adirondacks, evidence of Ted's work is everywhere. From the little girl who is getting ready for Head Start to her parents and grandparents who will need LIHEAP's help to pay their heating bills this winter to the community health network which is making health care possible for hundreds of my neighbors. His good work will live on through those programs and through all of us.

On that, I will end this with a quote from the man himself.

"The work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives and the dreams shall never die."

And so they do.

When it Comes to LIHEAP, There's No Time to Rest!

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most vulnerable – low and moderate income households with seniors, young children or disabled individuals. The effect is exacerbated because so many of these Americans live in warm climates.

Improved national funding helped Texas achieve a 200 percent improvement in the number of households served in fiscal 2009. This meteoric gain is tempered by the reality that we still serve a smaller fraction of eligible families in Texas versus the national average (12 percent vs. 21 percent). However, we're moving in the right direction!

In 2008, Texas received \$51 million from LIHEAP and reached nearly 50,000 households. In fiscal year 2009, the state received \$169 million to serve 150,000 of our estimated 1.2 million eligible households. Heretofore, due to scarce funds, eligible families could not earn more than 125 percent of poverty, and, households with disabled, elderly and very young individuals were prioritized. Fortunately, however, due to improved federal funding, Texas joined other states in recently raising its eligibility level. Texas lifted its threshold to 200 percent of poverty.

Funding LIHEAP with at least \$5.1 billion for a second year makes an effective program even better, and enables states and their charitable partners to serve even more families in need. Going forward, maintaining increased funding of LIHEAP funding should be a national imperative.

Clearly, we can do more to energize, sustain and improve LIHEAP. TXU Energy is proud to work with other energy providers, the nonprofit community, the National Fuel Funds Network and other leaders to urge the Congress to sustain and enhance LIHEAP. NFFN and the readers of the National Energy Assistance Report are particularly effective in this work.

Congress Returns to Work on Appropriations and Climate Change Bills

Congress has returned from its August recess and now begins work on two pieces of legislation important to the energy assistance community. Awaiting congressional action are bills funding the federal energy assistance program for FY 2010 and setting the course of the nation's energy policy.

The Senate version of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill, which contains the funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, has been reported out of the Senate Appropriations Committee and is waiting for consideration by the full Senate.

Both the Senate Appropriations Committee version of the appropriations bill and the version that has been approved by the House set funding for LIHEAP at \$5.1 billion for FY 2010. This amount is \$1.9 billion more than the amount requested by President Obama in his budget proposal for FY 2010.

Senate action on the bill is expected to be completed before the end of September and then the House and Senate would have to vote on a compromise version of the bill.

The other piece of legislation still on the Senate agenda is a bill designed to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases believed to be the cause of global warming. The House passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act earlier this year, but the Senate has yet to begin work on their energy bill.

Before the August recess, Senate leaders had set mid-September as a deadline for Senate committees to vote on language for the energy bill. As the *Report* goes to press, no action has been taken in the Senate.

The House bill would place a cap on greenhouse emissions and allow for the sale and trade of pollution allowances. The legislation calls for an overall limit on carbon dioxide emissions and requires companies that emit those gases to purchase allowances for each ton of carbon they emit.

Fifteen percent of the proceeds from the sale of pollution allowances would be used to provide relief for low income households from the increased costs for energy and other goods and services. For some of the eligible households relief would come in the form of an Energy Tax Credit. Others would receive direct monthly payments from the newly created Energy Refund Program.

Additional relief to consumers would come from provisions in the legislation that give free pollution allowances to local distribution companies to be used exclusively for the benefit of retail rate payers. The pollution allowances would be provided to local gas and electric utilities as well as home heating oil and propane companies.

The bill requires that these benefits be distributed equitably among the classes of rate payers.

NFFN Members Finding Ways to Use the Internet

National Fuel Funds Network members are finding new and creative ways of using the internet and social networking sites to better serve their clients and broaden their fund raising activities.

In Portland, Oregon HEAT has unveiled a revamped website that includes an interactive map that can direct users to the energy assistance agency in their area. Visitors to the site seeking aid with their utility bills can enter their zip code to find the agency that has Oregon Heat assistance in their county.

"As Oregon HEAT begins its 20th year of keeping low-income Oregonians warm in their own homes, we reflect on our founding principle of 'neighbor helping neighbor.' That's a core reason why we rebuilt our website: to better respond to our supporters - wherever they are - so we can better serve our neighbors in need" said Roger Rees, Oregon HEAT's executive director.

The new website – www.Oregonheat.org – also has an easier to use, secure site for making donations to Oregon HEAT as well as up to date information on events and happenings. Visitors to the site can view an online version of Oregon HEAT's newsletter and read tips and resources for conserving energy.

Rees said "We're also planning on using social networking to raise friends and funds. It's new territory for us organizationally, but we realize our neighbors – and supporters - reach from the boundaries of Oregon to those of the internet. We want to engage with supporters where they are: on social media and networking sites."



Annual fundraising drive underway

The Network's annual NFFN Energy Safety Net Safety fundraising drive is underway. A \$20,000 gift from New Jersey Natural Gas leads the way in a campaign that supports NFFN's work to enhance ongoing programs like LIHEAP Action Day, develop new programs and innovations and build membership.

At press time, the following companies and associations have contributed or pledged to the annual drive: Florida Power and Light, PSE&G, TXU Energy, Citizens Gas, Entergy, Dominion, American Electric Power, American

Utility Emergency Services Funds in Philadelphia has recently opened a Facebook page that contains information about the types of assistance available through the program as well as information on how to contribute to UESF.



John Rowe, UESF executive director said "I think that social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace are attractive for nonprofit organizations like UESF in reaching a broader community than our marketing efforts in the past. Publicizing new information about UESF, news and general energy assistance information are much more likely to be read in a timely fashion than on our website. The interactive nature of Facebook has allowed UESF to respond quickly to questions about our services. We are hopeful that these tools will also be interesting to new donors."

"I think that nonprofits should take advantage of free social networking tools," Rowe said. "The setup time and general maintenance is little compared to an organizational website."

The West Virginia Utility Assistance Program has begun electronically circulating a monthly up-date that gives subscribers information about the assistance program as well as the opportunity to contribute.

The electronic up-date contains links that allow users to locate agencies providing energy assistance as well as food, clothing, health services, child care and other services. There is also a link that leads to the program's eligibility criteria and an income calculator.

The West Virginia Utility Assistance Program is an initiative of Dollar Energy Fund, Inc in partnership with West Virginia's six major utilities, Allegheny Power, American Electric Power, Dominion Hope, Equitable Gas, Mountaineer Gas and WV American Water.

Public Gas Association, Edison Electric Institute, PG&E Corporation and New Jersey Natural Gas.

"Utility companies and associations contribute to the drive over and above membership dues, and we especially appreciate the Energy Safety Net gifts," said NFFN Executive Director George Coling. "They support our core work to achieve our mission."

For information about contributing to the Energy Safety Net fundraising drive, contact George Coling at coling@nationalfuel Funds.org or 202-824-0660

NEUAC Attracts More Than 600 to Portland (continued from page 3)

To provide a break from the regular workshops, the conference offered two Hot Topic sessions where conferees could hear 20 minute presentations on variety of subjects including the NFFN's Action Day, media relations and energy legislation.

In addition attendees also had the opportunity to participate in an exciting learning experience when they took part in a poverty simulation. This unique role-playing activity is designed to create a new level of understanding of the day-to-day realities of poverty in this country.

During the simulation, participants assumed the roles of low income families and went through the process of providing their families with food, shelter and other necessities of life. The conferees interacted with other role players representing government and community organizations.

On the final afternoon of the conference, the NFFN presented its annual awards. The NFFN's highest honor, the Sister Pat Kelley Achievement Award, was presented to Jacqueline Hutchinson of the Human Development Corporation of Metropolitan St. Louis. Ms. Hutchinson was selected for the honor because of her three decade commitment to helping low income families.

The Victorine Q. Adams Award, spotlighting institutional innovation and achievement among nonprofit NFFN members, was presented to New Jersey SHARES for its continuing efforts to broaden its assistance programs and expand the numbers of clients served.

Right: Jacqueline Hutchinson of the Human Development Corporation of Metropolitan St. Louis is presented the NFFN's highest honor, the Sister Pat Kelley Achievement Award

The NFFN Corporate Excellence Award was presented to Peoples Gas of Chicago for its ongoing outreach efforts and increase in funding for the Share the Warmth Fund.

The Extra Mile Award, presented annually to the member of Congress who has demonstrated legislative achievement for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program was awarded to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi.

The NLIEC presented its national Achievement Award for 2009 to Ken Thiry of Wisconsin Public Service, who served for more than eight years as a member of the organization's Board of Directors and chaired or co-chaired five of its national conferences.



NEUAC Attracts More Than 600 to Portland



Attendees at the second annual National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference.

More than 600 people traveled to Portland, Oregon in June to attend the second annual National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference. The focus of this year's conference was on national energy policy and its impacts on low income households.

The conference, presented by the National Fuel Funds Network and the National Low Income Energy Consortium, is the largest single gathering in the United States to discuss the need to make home energy and other utilities affordable for people with low income.

With Congress continuing to work on legislation that will shape America's energy future, the NEUAC provided timely updates and substantive discussions of the provisions contained in the perspective legislation. Featured speakers as well as panelists in workshops addressed questions about "cap and trade", low income set asides, and how to shield low income households from higher energy costs.

Noted historian and authority on the American West, Dr. Patricia Limerick, a featured luncheon speaker, warned of the possible unintended consequences to low income households from legislation to reduce carbon emissions. "As energy prices rise, American citizens have an obligation to think about those who will have the hardest time finding the resources to pay those prices," she said.

Dr. Limerick, who is the faculty director and chair of the board of the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado at Boulder, urged conference attendees to work to insure that the "good intentions" of national energy policy do not negatively impact those who have the most to lose. She pointed out that the realities of the transition to a new energy economy do not need to place additional burdens on low income households.

Another featured speakers included Michael W. Grainey, a Special Counsel to the Director of the Oregon Department of Economic Development and Bonneville Power Administration Administrator Stephen Wright.

Two plenary sessions discussed the local impacts of national energy policy and the local benefits of regional greenhouse gas initiatives. In the session on energy policy, Chuck Ebert of The Energy Project and Ron Ruggiero of the Apollo Alliance outlined several aspects of proposals contained in the energy bill including utility decoupling, implementation of a smart grid, clean coal and cap and trade.

Former Texas Congressman John Stenholm, a consultant with the American Petroleum Institute, also participated in the energy policy session and supported increased drilling in the United States as a means of reducing the nation's dependency on foreign oil.

The plenary session on the local benefits of regional greenhouse gas initiatives focused on how monies generated through the auctioning of carbon allowances can be used to provide energy assistance and weatherization for low income households. The panel included Bill Drumheller of the Oregon Department of Housing and the Western Climate Initiative, Jesse Heier of the Midwestern Governors Association and the Midwestern Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accord, James Jacob of New Jersey SHARES and Dale McCormick of the Maine-Housing and Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

The conference featured more than 40 workshops in seven tracks including Energy Availability and Sustainability, Weatherization and Conservation, Energy Assistance and Education, Outreach and Advocacy, Vulnerable Populations, Energy Programs in Indian Country and the Evolution of Utility and Fuel Programs.

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8th Annual LIHEAP Action Day Set for February

On February 10, 2010, the National Fuel Funds Network will sponsor its 8th annual LIHEAP Action Day to support \$5.1 billion in funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program for FY 2011.

This annual grassroots lobbying event serves to kick-off advocacy efforts to keep funding for this vital federal energy assistance program at its authorized level. Over the years, hundreds of NFFN members as well as representatives of other nonprofit organizations, consumer advocacy programs, utility and fuel oil companies and associations, and local, state and Tribal governments have traveled to Washington to participate in this highly successful event.

LIHEAP Action Day advocates fan out over Capitol Hill meeting with their Senators, Representatives and staff members and carrying the uniform message – provide

needed LIHEAP funding. They also join with some members of Congress in a mid-day news conference.

Registration is now open. Visit the NFFN website -- www.nationalfuel funds.org – to register and check your email for NFFN alerts with more details on LIHEAP Action Day.

NFFN's LIHEAP Action Day will begin with a breakfast briefing at 8:15 am and conclude with an afternoon reception. The NFFN will also provide a central gathering place on Capitol Hill, talking points and background information, expert advice and training in lobbying for LIHEAP.

NFFN has arranged for discounted hotel rates at the Red Roof Inn, 500 H Street NW, Washington, DC. Please visit the Network's website for complete details on the hotel rates.

Register now, put the date on your calendar and plan on coming to Washington to support LIHEAP.