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## National Fuel Funds Network

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### **Energy Safety Net Bulletin #149**

The historic snowfalls in Washington in February led to the cancellation of activities planned for the NFFN's LIHEAP Action Day. Next week the NFFN will announce plans for a new series of activities through which members can demonstrate their support for increased funding for federal energy assistance program.

Although the Action Day activities planned for Washington were called off, some NFFN members showed their support for LIHEAP in events held in their home states while others contacted Congressional offices to discuss support for increased funding for LIHEAP.

In Little Rock, Sen. Blanche Lincoln; Hugh McDonald, president of Entergy Arkansas; Rose Adams, executive director of the Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association; Thomas Green, assistant director of the state's Office of Community Services; and Jema Quintana, a former LIHEAP recipient spoke at a news conference at the state fair grounds.

"With the record-breaking cold weather that recently gripped Arkansans for weeks, families were forced to use more energy. This will inevitably lead to higher energy bills in the weeks ahead," Lincoln said. "Arkansans are lining up, sometimes for hours, to apply for LIHEAP, including an unusually large number of seniors, the under-employed, as well as many who are applying for the first time in their lives. It is stories like these that have convinced me that LIHEAP must be better funded nationally and especially here in Arkansas."

McDonald urged the Congress to provide \$7.6 billion in funding for LIHEAP for the next fiscal year, and Quintana explained to the media how LIHEAP funds had helped her get her electricity turned back on during a difficult time in her life. Quintana now works for the community action agency where she received LIHEAP assistance.

Click on the following links to see local television coverage of the press conference.

<<http://cfc.katv.com/videoondemand.cfm?id=59310>> <<http://www.todaysthv.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=99743&catid=2>> .

In a separate action, Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe issued a proclamation declaring

February 10, 2010 “Arkansas LIHEAP Day 2010.”

### **LIHEAP**

- Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA) has introduced legislation (H.R. 4554) that would increase the authorized funding level for LIHEAP to \$7.6 billion per year for fiscal years 2011 to 2014. The bill, the Energy Assistance for American Families Act, would also extend the expanded eligibility levels to families whose incomes total up to 75 percent of their state’s median income level.

### **Fuel Fund Actions**

- Over \$300,000 was raised during the 7th annual “WWJ Newsradio 950 Winter Survival Radiothon for THAW.” The 31-hour event for the benefit of The Heat and Warmth Fund in Michigan, held on February 5th and 6th, featured local celebrities including Detroit Mayor Dave Bing and Detroit Lions Head Coach Jim Schwartz.
- In Pittsburgh, the “2010 Newsradio 1020 KDKA Warmathon” raised \$192,400 for the Dollar Energy Fund. Broadcast live from the PPG Wintergarden on February 11th and 12th, the event raised funds to help over 685 area families maintain their utility service.

Dollar Energy Fund CEO Cindy Datig said “Because of the generosity of our neighbors during the Warmathon, Dollar Energy Fund will be able to provide more assistance to make sure none of our less fortunate neighbors have to face a Pittsburgh winter without utility service.”

- In Massachusetts, Rockland Trust has donated \$7,000 to the Salvation Army’s Good Neighbor Energy Fund. The funds were raised during a month long “Warm for the Winter” drive held at the bank’s 71 branches. During December, Rockland Trust sold paper mittens for \$1, \$3, and \$5 with the money going to the Salvation Army.
- Energy Outreach Colorado has announced that it is distributing \$1.7 million in energy assistance to provide additional relief for Coloradans struggling with home energy bills.

Skip Arnold, executive director of Energy Outreach Colorado, said “many of Colorado’s limited income families and seniors are overwhelmed by their heating bills this winter, particularly if they’ve experienced a job layoff or other difficulties. Our state experienced its coldest December in years and January temperatures were cold as well, so we’re anticipating many households experiencing higher energy bills than they can handle.”

- Baltimore’s only FM sports station, 105.7 The Fan, is conducting a four day fund raising drive to benefit the Fuel Fund of Maryland. The “2010 Warmathon” is being led by the station’s morning personality Ed Norris. The “Warmathon” will run from February 22-26.

### **Utility Actions**

- Nuclear Innovation North America has agreed to donate \$10 million over four years to the Residential Energy Assistance Partnership in San Antonio as part of a partnership

agreement with CPS Energy. The REAP program helps disadvantaged elderly, disabled and low income customers with small children in San Antonio and Bexar County pay their gas and electric bills.

- Peoples Natural Gas has taken over the operations of Dominion Peoples, serving approximately 359,000 customers in 16 counties in southwestern Pennsylvania. The company also announced that Morgan K. O'Brien would be its CEO. Since September, 2001, O'Brien has been the CEO of Duquesne Light.

### **National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference**

- The 2010 National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference is set for June 14-16 at the Hyatt Regency San Antonio on the Riverwalk. The National Low Income Energy Consortium and NFFN co-present the conference and are expecting 600 - 700 energy assistance leaders to attend. The preliminary conference program is posted at <http://www.energyandutilityconference.org/2010%20Schedule.html>. Registration will open soon.

### **Awards and Honors**

- Cindy Datig, chief executive officer of Dollar Energy Fund, has been selected as a 2010 Diamond Award winner. This award recognizes excellence in CEOs or equivalents of companies or non-profits in the 10 county Pittsburgh region. Ms. Datig is one of 12 CEOs and presidents in the Pittsburgh area to receive this honor.

- The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association has named Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA) the recipient of the "Joe Moakley Award for Outstanding Congressional Service in Support of Low Income Home Energy Assistance."

"The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program has been a key priority for Rep. Markey since the program was enacted in the early 1980s," said Mark Wolfe, the Executive Director of NEADA. "He has been a leader in helping low income families meet their energy needs not just in Massachusetts, but across the nation." Wolfe said Markey's introduction of legislation would increase LIHEAP funding is yet one more example the members of NEADA voted unanimously to honor Rep. Markey.

### **Reports and Studies**

- The number of households served by LIHEAP is projected to reach 8.8 million this year, up by almost 13 percent over last year's record of 7.7 million, according to the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association. Recently released results of NEADA's Winter Application Survey showed that applications for assistance were up by more than 15 percent in 21 states and more than 25 percent in Mississippi, Washington, Michigan and Nevada. For more information on the NEADA survey, visit <http://www.neada.org> .

- Research conducted by Children's HealthWatch has determined that young children whose families struggle to pay their utility bills are more likely to suffer a host of problems including food insecurity, poor health, hospitalizations and developmental delays. The recently released "Policy Action Brief" also concluded that LIHEAP is effective at shielding young children from the harmful effects of energy insecurity. To read the complete brief click on the

following link Energy Insecurity is a Major Threat to Child Health <[http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/upload/resource/energy\\_brief\\_feb10.pdf](http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/upload/resource/energy_brief_feb10.pdf)> .

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