

## **Weatherization Tips Offered as Part of Governor Rendell's Stay Warm PA Initiative**

**10/21/2005: HARRISBURG** — In conjunction with Governor Edward G. Rendell's "Stay Warm PA" initiative, the state departments of Environmental Protection and Aging today offered tips and advice to Pennsylvanians about weatherizing their homes and adopting energy conservation practices to help ease the anticipated financial shock of record energy prices this winter.

"Rising energy costs affect every Pennsylvanian, making conservation an important part of any winter heating plan," DEP Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty said. "Adopting some simple conservation practices can stretch your energy dollars even further by helping to reduce the amount of energy you use and lowering the cost of monthly utility bills."

"Many older adults live in older homes that may not be as well insulated as newer structures," said Secretary of Aging Nora Dowd Eisenhower. "That is why it is important for all homeowners – and especially older homeowners -- to improve the energy efficiency of their home through weatherization and conservation efforts."

According to DEP, weatherizing your home can help to reduce energy bills from 10 to 50 percent. DEP recommends these tips to improve energy efficiency at home:

- Inspect your home and seal any cracks or openings around windows, doors, fireplaces, pipes, electrical outlets and bathroom, kitchen or clothes dryer vents.
- If you own an older home, adding storm doors and windows can reduce heat loss by up to 50 percent.
- Purchase plastic window covering kits or interior storm window kits. Carefully follow instructions.
- Add insulation to your attic, as well as any walls and floors that are adjacent to an unheated space such as a garage.
- Have your furnace or heating unit serviced to ensure it is working safely and efficiently. Replace furnace filters regularly.
- Set your thermostat at 68 degrees and dress warmly. Use more blankets at night.
- Open draperies on sunny days; close them at night and on cloudy days.
- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs, which are more energy-efficient and last longer than traditional light bulbs.
- Lower the thermostat on your hot water heater to 115 degrees F.
- Turn off electric appliances when not in use.

Secretary McGinty reminded residents that Lowe's, with some 60 stores across Pennsylvania, is partnering with Governor Rendell to hold weatherization workshops at least on a weekly basis at senior centers and other locations. The home improvement company also is providing plastic sheeting, caulking, door guards and other weatherization materials at no cost to volunteer groups helping to winterize homes of seniors and needy families.

Administered by the Department of Community and Economic Development, the Pennsylvania Weatherization Program works to make homes more energy efficient. Targeted to low-income, elderly or handicapped residents, the program offers services such as modification or replacement of heating systems, taking steps to reduce air leakage, installing attic insulation and educating consumers about conservation methods. For more information or to contact a local weatherization agency, call 1-800-379-7448 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

For older homeowners who do not qualify for government or utility-sponsored weatherization programs, another option is to hire a dependable local contractor to perform any needed work.

"I always encourage older consumers be very careful when hiring a contractor to perform any work around the house," said Secretary Dowd Eisenhower. "Contact your local Better Business Bureau or Area Agency on Aging and ask if they can recommend a reputable business that is known for performing quality work at a reasonable price."

On Oct. 19, Governor Rendell announced a comprehensive "Stay Warm PA" plan to address the looming energy crisis. Key components of the Governor's plan include:

- Seeking additional federal funds for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).
- Authorizing up to \$18 million in state resources, including \$15 million for LIHEAP and \$3 million for the state's Homeowner Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program.
- Asking energy companies to help low-income consumers meet their winter bills.
- Creating a partnership with home supply retailers to help seniors and others winterize.
- Marshaling families and friends to help take care of their homes to help lower winter heating bills.
- Convening a statewide Stay Warm PA summit with volunteers and religious organizations to protect the most vulnerable citizens.
- Enabling the Energy Star sales tax holiday.
- Reducing the commonwealth's energy use.
- Ensuring that poor families have a second chance to make energy payments before utilities are turned off.
- Removing hurdles for poor families seeking to reconnect fuel service.

For more information about Governor Rendell's Stay Warm PA initiative, visit the Governor's Web site at [www.governor.state.pa.us](http://www.governor.state.pa.us). To learn about assistance programs, weatherization resources and energy conservation ideas, visit [www.staywarmpa.com](http://www.staywarmpa.com).