

Summer
2008



The H.E.A.T. Factor



A NEWSLETTER OF THE HEATING ENERGY ASSISTANCE TEAM, INC.

From the Executive Director

With global warming and high prices at the gas pump and grocery store, everyone is feeling the pinch! We are all conscious of trying to incorporate energy-efficient practices into our daily lives. Some of us are lucky enough to weather the energy storm - we have savings accounts that provide the cushion in an emergency.

However, many of our fellow citizens aren't as fortunate. Unfavorable events, such as employment loss or unexpected healthcare expenses for a sick loved one, are unpredictable. Coupled with the high price of gasoline, these unforeseen changes

have certainly made it the worst of times for a lot of people. I am asking you to keep this information in mind as you read the story of Annie Harris on page two.

With people like you on the team, H.E.A.T. has been able to provide energy assistance to Georgians who are experiencing financial hardships. Please send a donation to H.E.A.T. today. We can weather the storm together. As always, thank you for your continued generosity.

Janet H. Joseph
Executive Director

Outlook on Energy Assistance Funding

Throughout the country, many state governments have faced budget deficits, providing very little funding for energy assistance programs. Many low- to middle-income households are still in the arrears for their winter home energy bills. With rising costs of gasoline at the pump, many low-income households have opted to use public transportation rather than personal vehicles with the hope that they can use the gasoline savings to pay home utility bills. According to the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association, as of March 31, 2008, approximately 15.6 million households owed nearly \$5 billion in unpaid energy bills, which is an increase of almost \$640, million or 9.5% more than the same period in 2007. The average amount owed was \$318. Additionally, nearly 15% of all households were at least 30 days past due in utility

bill payments. Home heating costs are expected to rise significantly for the 2008-2009 winter season.

This past winter, Georgia received \$23 million in federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds; more than \$6.6 million from the Universal Service Fund provided by the GA Public Service Commission; and \$705,000 from H.E.A.T. in emergency funds. As of May 19, 2008, many counties had depleted their allocation of LIHEAP and H.E.A.T. funds.

Despite the gasoline crisis, the record-high number of households in the arrears, and the increased need for energy assistance, the current administration has proposed a 22% cut in LIHEAP funding for 2009. Please encourage your congressional representatives to support increased funding for energy assistance.

Ms. Annie Harris . . . A Success Story

For most of her life, Atlanta resident Annie Harris took care of other people. She cleaned their homes and provided loving care for their children. But when serious health problems forced the 65-year-old to retire, she quickly realized that this time *she* was the one who needed help.

Ms. Harris suffers from high blood pressure and sleep apnea, and she receives dialysis three times a week. She is always connected to her oxygen tank and has to sleep with a breathing mask on at night. Her small fixed monthly income often leaves her with some tough decisions – should she buy food or pay her monthly bills? Often the food comes last.

But when she heard from friends about the possibility of getting energy assistance, she applied and received some much-needed financial help with her energy bills.

“Before I got help, I sat in the dark many nights without lights because I couldn’t pay my electric bill,” she says.

Ms. Harris says she would rather be self-sufficient and not have to ask for assistance. “I’d rather be independent,” she explains, “but I have to overcome the feeling that I’m begging. So many people are like me. They can’t help where they are. I encourage anyone who can to give to H.E.A.T. because if I could, I would give, too. H.E.A.T. is a blessing to a lot of people.”



Donate to H.E.A.T. *Many less fortunate families need your help today.*

Donate online at www.heatga.org or complete this form and mail it with your check to the address below.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: (_____) _____

H.E.A.T.

Wachovia Bank, N.A.

P. O. Box 930112

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The “Friendly” City of Tifton Wins Again!



Utilities Coordinator, Jacqueline Gurz, accepts MGAG-H.E.A.T. Award from H.E.A.T. Executive Director, Janet Joseph.

The Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia (MGAG) has, for the second time, presented the MGAG-H.E.A.T. Award to the beautiful City of Tifton! The award is given to the Georgia city whose residents raise the most dollars per meter for energy assistance. With the effort lead by Jacqueline Gurz (Utilities Coordinator), the Tifton citizens raised nearly \$4,800 to help 20 needy households with their energy bills. This year’s donation by Tifton is nearly \$800 more than their 2007 donation amount.

Janet Joseph, executive director for H.E.A.T., said that “even in these tough economic times, Georgia is very fortunate to have big hearts in Tifton.” The total amount given by the citizens of the other cities was \$9,704. She expressed appreciation for all of the 19 participating Georgia cities.



Energy Conservation and GOING GREEN: Hand-in-Hand

To many, energy conservation and going green go hand-in-hand. All of us – rich and poor – can do our part to ensure that our descendants have the necessary energy resources to live productive, fulfilling lives. We can reduce energy bills and greenhouse gas emissions by following the tips below.

1. Recycle products such as, paper, aluminum and plastics, whenever possible.
2. Reduce the number of vehicle trips. Run errands in one trip rather than multiple trips. Additionally, telework whenever possible and permissible.
3. Replace or repair energy-draining household appliances with more energy-efficient products. Look for the ENERGY STAR label on products and appliances.
4. Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient, fluorescent bulbs.
5. Set thermostats to 78 degrees in the summer and turn off ceiling fans when leaving the room.
6. Keep shades closed during the day to keep rooms cooler during warmer months.
7. Clean or replace air filters monthly.
8. Wash and dry only full loads of clothes, preferably in cold water.
9. Use small pots and pans (if practical) when cooking because they take less energy to heat.

Tips for Children



1. Turn off the radio, TV, and computer games when not in use.
2. Turn off the lights whenever you leave the bedroom or bathroom.
3. Take short showers.

Welcome to the Team – New Board Members



Delores Smith-Johnson is the Outreach Coordinator for the McKinney Community Health Center, Inc. Her responsibilities include developing and implementing marketing plans/strategies, acting as the center's community liaison for meetings and events, and promoting the mission and vision of the center. While serving in her current capacity, she also served as the Interim Coordinator of the Southeast GeorgiaCares, which is the

state SHIP program that provides counseling and referral services to seniors and Medicare-eligible individuals.

Mrs. Smith-Johnson holds AS and BS degrees in biology from Middle Georgia College and the University of Georgia, respectively. She has also received certification under the Work Ready Ware Initiative. She is very active in the community and serves on the Ware County Board of Education Health Advisory Committee, Waycross Operation Weed and Seed Steering Committee, the Aging and Disability Resource Connection, and the Chief Jim Blackburn Senior Safety Day Planning Committee.

In her spare time, Mrs. Smith-Johnson enjoys freelance writing. She had an essay entitled "My Definition of a Leader," published in Management Minutes by Sattiewhite Training Productions, Inc. in 2007. Mrs. Smith-Johnson is married to Mr. Melvin Johnson, and they are members of Family Worship Center in Waycross, GA.



David Godfrey has been a part of the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) energy team since June 2006. His duties include establishing and maintaining a statewide utility database system to help facilities track and analyze energy usage; working with the Department of Administrative Services to manage a natural gas purchasing program for state government; and providing staff support for the State Facilities Energy

Council, which was set up by the Governor's Executive Order to develop recommendations for state agencies to save energy and reduce costs.

Prior to joining GEFA, Mr. Godfrey worked at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) from 1999 to 2006. He managed the Southeast Region's Industrial Technologies program, developing state coalitions of business, government and academic partners to increase the efficiency and reduce the energy intensity of our top energy-use industries. He also worked in DOE's Clean Cities and Bioenergy programs. Before DOE, he worked for Atlanta Gas Light Company and for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Mr. Godfrey has a BA degree in political science from Georgia State University. Additionally, he holds a MPA degree in public administration from the University of Georgia. He lives in Atlanta, GA with his wife, Nancy Porteous. They have one daughter, Amelia Godfrey.

*Georgians meet their energy needs
Helping low-income*

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Join our Team – Volunteer!

Do you get along well with people and want to make a difference in the community? Great! **H.E.A.T.** always has volunteer opportunities in the areas of fundraising, administration, writing, coordinating events, etc. Just call our office at **678-406-0212** for an application. We would love to have you on our Team!

H.E.A.T., Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides energy assistance statewide for Georgians in need. Qualified households receive assistance regardless of the energy used – natural gas, electricity, propane, oil, or other types of energy sources.