

PPL Announces Measures to Help Customers Cope with High Fuel Prices

Gas Utility Expands Assistance Program, Triples Contribution to Hardship Fund, Increases Shut-off Protections

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ALLENTOWN, Pa.

Responding to growing concerns that record-high natural gas and oil prices will make it hard for some people to afford to heat their homes, PPL Gas Utilities announced a series of actions today (11/9) to expand services for low-income customers, including an expansion of its Customer Assistance Program.

Robert M. Geneczko, president of PPL Gas Utilities and vice president of Customer Services for PPL Electric Utilities, noted that customers of PPL Electric Utilities will not pay higher rates due to rising oil and gas prices. Rates for the electric generation portion of their bills are set through 2009.

"The extraordinarily high energy prices we've seen are primarily a result of oil and natural gas price increases," Geneczko said. "The focus of our initiatives is on the needs of natural gas customers, particularly those most at risk as the heating season begins, which is in keeping with the objectives of Governor Rendell's Stay Warm Pennsylvania program."

PPL Gas Utilities will increase enrollment in its Customer Assistance Program by 10 percent, to more than 2,400 low-income households.

PPL Gas Utilities, which is one of the smallest natural gas distribution companies in Pennsylvania, offers a Customer Assistance Program even though it is not required to do so by PUC regulations. The program provides more affordable gas bills to customers who qualify based on their income.

"We have provided more than \$1.1 million in assistance to low-income customers this year through our Customer Assistance Program, which is an important safety net for our most vulnerable customers," Geneczko said.

In addition, PPL Gas Utilities is extending shut-off protection to additional low-income customers this winter. The company will not shut off service to customers who earn less than 300 percent of the poverty level as defined by the federal government. That equates to income of \$58,000 a year for a family of four.

PPL Gas Utilities also is tripling its donation to Operation Share, a company-sponsored program that provides cash grants for gas heating bills to customers with financial hardships. The total donation will be \$150,000.

Geneczko said that even though customers of PPL Electric Utilities have protection from energy price increases, the company is increasing funding for long-standing programs that help low-income customers.

"We know that some of our electricity customers, especially those with limited and fixed incomes, will struggle with higher costs for other sources of energy," he explained.

PPL Electric Utilities will give 40 percent more to its Operation HELP program, increasing the company's contribution for this winter to \$700,000.

Over the past 22 years, Operation HELP has provided \$14.7 million in grants to help customers with financial hardships pay any type of heating bill. PPL Electric Utilities was one of the first utilities in the country to offer a heating assistance program.

PPL Electric Utilities has increased the amount of assistance provided to low-income customers through its OnTrack payment program by 24 percent since 2003. OnTrack provides for reduced payments based on customers' ability to pay, and includes debt forgiveness.

Combined, PPL Electric Utilities and PPL Gas Utilities expect to spend \$26.5 million in 2006 for programs that

help customers in need with bill payments, energy conservation and debt forgiveness.

"PPL is continuing a tradition of caring, and is stepping up its level of commitment this winter," Geneczko said. "We hope that state and federal governments and other energy companies - both regulated and unregulated - will do more for people who will be most at risk this winter from high oil and gas prices."

PPL recently sent a letter to members of Congress serving eastern and central Pennsylvania asking them to support an appropriation of \$5.1 billion in regular funding and \$1.276 billion in supplemental funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

PPL Electric Utilities serves 1.3 million customers in 29 counties of eastern and central Pennsylvania. PPL Gas Utilities serves 77,000 customers in parts of 34 counties in Pennsylvania.

Both are subsidiaries of PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL), headquartered in Allentown, Pa., which controls about 12,000 megawatts of generating capacity in the United States, sells energy in key U.S. markets and delivers electricity to 5 million customers in Pennsylvania, the United Kingdom and Latin America. More information is available at <http://www.pplweb.com/>.

SOURCE: PPL Corporation

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