

# CUSTOMER connection

Ideas, Advice and News from Minnesota Energy Resources

November 2008

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## CONNECTING with us

visit us online  
[minnesotaenergyresources.com](http://minnesotaenergyresources.com)

24-hour customer service  
800-889-9508

24-hour gas emergency  
800-889-4970

call before you dig  
811

home services  
800-889-3479

## winter ENERGY- SAVING TIPS



Minnesota Energy Resources is constantly thinking of ways to help you save money and energy. As part of our monthly Energy-Saving Tips section, here are a few ways you can be more energy efficient this winter season.

- **Set Ceiling Fans Clockwise.** If you have ceiling fans in your home, check to see if they are reversible. In winter, the blades should rotate clockwise. This reverse rotation will collect warm air from the ceiling and pull it downwards. Set the fan at its slowest speed to avoid creating a breeze. This tip will allow you to lower your thermostat a few degrees, saving energy and money during the winter months.
- **Insulate, Caulk and Seal Leaks.** Big or small, every home has leaks. Your windows, air ducts, door jams and even your electrical outlets can let cold air into your home. Sealing and properly insulating these areas of your home will allow your heating system to work more efficiently, saving dollars every month.
- **Get Your Water Heater a Blanket.** Blanket kits for gas water heaters are available at most home supply stores and prevent up to 97% of radiant heat loss. These kits cost about \$20 to \$30, are easy to install and virtually pay for themselves in energy savings.
- **Get Yourself a Blanket.** The simplest energy-saving method during the winter months is to be prepared. Wearing warmer clothes indoors or using a blanket will allow you to turn your thermostat down at least one or two degrees. You can save energy and money, while staying cozy and comfortable.

## BUSINESS corner



## commercial and industrial energy-saving audits

If you think you might be spending more on energy than you should, consider having a professional Commercial and Industrial Energy Audit conducted by Minnesota Energy Resources.

An audit can provide your business with substantial ways to save energy and reduce operating costs. And the best part, Minnesota Energy Resources will even reimburse you up to 100% of the audit cost when you implement just one of the several audit recommendations. There is a limit of three buildings per customer per year. The audit reimbursement incentive works like this:

- **Non-profits, Schools and Governmental customers**  
-Eligible for 100% reimbursements not to exceed \$550 per building under 25,000 sq ft, and \$750 for buildings over 25,000 sq ft.
- **Customers not included in the non-profit group**  
-Eligible for an incentive equal to 50% of the audit cost up to \$275 per building under 25,000 sq ft, and \$375 for buildings over 25,000 sq ft.

Your audit may be performed by any qualified auditor of your choosing; however, please be sure the auditor you select meets Minnesota Energy Resources' Criteria for Auditors and Energy Audits. These criteria are outlined on our Web site.

The other option is to let Minnesota Energy Resources handle the request. We make it easy. Just call us today or visit us online to get your audit started. Minnesota Energy Resources will arrange to have a qualified energy auditor contact you in 1-5 business days to schedule your certified Commercial and Industrial Energy Audit.

No matter who performs your audit, the report must cover multiple aspects of energy use including HVAC system controls, HVAC system efficiency and operations, domestic hot water usage and building-enveloped insulation.

For more information about Commercial and Industrial Energy Audits and whether your business qualifies for a rebate, please contact Minnesota Energy Resources at **800-889-9508** or visit us online at [minnesotaenergyresources.com](http://minnesotaenergyresources.com).

Funding is limited and applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. All Commercial and Industrial Energy Audits must be conducted before the end of the year. Rebate programs end December 31, 2008, or sooner, based on availability of program funds.



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Customer Connection  
P.O. Box 19001  
Green Bay, WI 54307-9001

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[minnesotaenergyresources.com](http://minnesotaenergyresources.com)

# energy ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

## low-income energy assistance program

Contact: *Local County Energy Assistance Program Agency*  
The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) helps pay home heating costs.

- Households who are at or below 50 percent of the state median income are eligible.
- Size of grant is based on household size, income, fuel type and energy usage.
- Households with the lowest income and highest fuel costs receive the highest grants.
- Federally funded through U.S. Department of Human Services.
- Funds are available for renters or homeowners.

Services include:

- Direct payment to the energy supplier.
- Home heating energy efficiency and safety education.
- Advocate with energy suppliers and human service providers on behalf of utility customers.
- Crisis help for utility disconnections.
- Emergency heating system repair or replacement.

Minnesota residents also may obtain an application and more information by calling **800-657-3710** to locate the local agency serving their county.

### Maximum Eligible Income for Program Dates 10-01-2008 to 09-30-2009

Household Size	Annual	3-month
1	\$21,184	\$5,296
2	\$27,702	\$6,925
3	\$34,220	\$8,555
4	\$40,738	\$10,184
5	\$47,256	\$11,814
6	\$53,774	\$13,443
7	\$54,996	\$13,749
8	\$56,219	\$14,054
9	\$57,441	\$14,360
10	\$58,663	\$14,665

\*Based on 50% of State Median Income or 110% of Poverty, whichever is greater.



## low-income weatherization assistance program

Contact: *Local Community Action Program Agency*  
The Weatherization Assistance Program provides free home energy conservation services to eligible low-income homeowners and renters. Weatherization may include caulking, weatherstripping, insulating and smoke detectors.



## 2008 earned income credit

Contact: *U.S. Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service*

The Earned Income Credit (EIC) is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families who meet certain requirements and file a tax return. Those who qualify will owe less in taxes and may get a refund. Even people who do not generally owe income taxes may qualify for the EIC, however they must file a tax return to do so. If they are married, they must file jointly to qualify. Form 1040 or 1040A, with the EIC form attached, is needed to file. If you are raising a qualifying child in your home in 2008, you may also be able to receive part of the credit in your paycheck during the year with Advance EIC. Form W-5 is available from employers or by calling **800-TAX-FORM**.

## have you completed your FURNACE SAFETY CHECK-UP?

Minnesota Energy Resources would like to remind you to have your furnace inspected by a licensed, qualified technician each year. Then, follow these safety steps throughout the entire heating season:

- Clean or replace your furnace filter.
- Periodically check the flame in the burner to make sure it is blue. A yellow flame may indicate the need for an adjustment.



- Check your chimney flues for corrosion and make sure all vents are clear of any blockages or debris.
- Keep the area around your furnace and water heater clean. Do not store flammable liquids or other combustibles near the equipment.

For more safety information, visit [minnesotaenergyresources.com](http://minnesotaenergyresources.com) or call **800-889-9508**.

## help us help OUR NEIGHBORS

For many, winter is a difficult time, especially for those who are elderly, disadvantaged or disabled. At Minnesota Energy Resources, we believe we have a responsibility to help those in need throughout our communities — during winter and all year long. Through HeatShare, a Salvation Army program, we provide assistance to residents who are struggling with their energy bills or emergency energy-related expenses.

Would you like to help? Make your tax-deductible\* donation to HeatShare today, and we'll do our part by matching your gift at 50 cents on the dollar.

Here's how to contribute:

1. Donate anytime throughout the year by simply completing the contribution form and enclosing it with your utility stub and payment check.

OR

2. Make a one-time contribution by mailing a check, money order or cashier's check directly to the Salvation Army. Make checks payable to:

**HeatShare – Salvation Army**  
**2445 Prior Avenue**  
**Roseville, MN 55113**

**Remember:** You must first complete and return the contribution form before any dollars can be directed to the HeatShare program. Money added to your utility bill without first completing and returning the form will be credited to your next utility bill.

\*Please retain a record of your contributions for tax purposes.

### CONTRIBUTION FORM

**I would like to include my monthly contribution to HeatShare on my utility bill. My monthly contribution is:**

\$1    \$3    \$5    \$10    \$20    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Utility Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize Minnesota Energy Resources to add my monthly contribution to my utility bill. I understand that my contribution amount will be separately detailed on my bill and that I may revoke it at any time by calling Minnesota Energy Resources at **800-889-9508**.

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (work) \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING YOUR COMMUNITY.**