



Crawfordsville, IN
 Updated 10:29 AM EST TUE DEC 01 2009
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Vectren renews energy assistance

EVANSVILLE - More than 30,000 low-income Vectren customers in Indiana will receive significant reductions in their natural gas bills this winter thanks to the extension of a Universal Service Program (USP) created by Vectren Energy Delivery of Indiana (Vectren) and Citizens Energy Group in Indianapolis.

This week, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) extended the program through Oct. 31, 2012, to help low-income natural gas customers by providing reduced bills and crisis assistance to working poor families. The USP will provide an annual total of about \$5 million in assistance to Vectren customers.

Beginning Dec. 1, 2009, eligible customers who have applied for the state's Energy Assistance Program (EAP) through local community action agencies will automatically be enrolled in the new USP and will receive bill reductions in addition to EAP assistance.

For qualifying Vectren customers, monthly bill reductions will likely range from 15 to 32 percent of the total bill (not including EAP benefits) in the months of December through May. Last heating season, more than 30,000 Vectren natural gas customers qualified for the EAP.

For a customer to qualify for USP assistance, the following criteria must be met:

- φ° 1. The customer must reside in Indiana and have a Vectren account that is designated for residential natural gas heating.
- φ° 2. The customer must enroll in and qualify for assistance from EAP. To apply for the EAP, customers should call 1-800-872-0371 to locate their nearest community action agency.
- φ° 3. The customer's gross household income must be at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level, which would be \$33,000 for a family of four.
- φ° 4. The customer must reside at the service address.
- 5. There must be only one account in the customer's name.

Customers are also encouraged to apply for all residential (home or rental) weatherization programs, including programs available from the State of Indiana through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Customers who are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines may qualify for these weatherization programs.

The USP also will provide additional funding to Vectren customers in the form of crisis assistance programs, which target qualified low-income and working-poor households that need additional help to get reconnected and/or maintain heat throughout the upcoming winter. The programs will provide assistance to households up to 200 percent of the poverty level who might not otherwise be available for traditional assistance.

"Even though natural gas bills are projected to be lower this winter, many Hoosiers are dealing with financial hardships given the state of the economy," said Vectren Vice President of Marketing and Conservation Doug Pettitt. "State and federal energy assistance funds are often depleted in early winter and aren't sufficient to meet the growing needs of all low-income Hoosiers. The bill discount component of the USP will provide those low-income customers an opportunity to make affordable payments toward maintaining their natural gas service. We also continue to encourage these customers to utilize our Conservation Connection programs to enable them to use less natural gas through energy efficiency measures."

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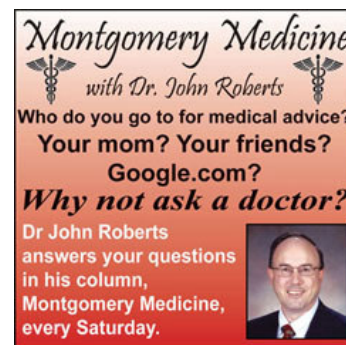
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