

## **LAWMAKERS ADDRESS HEATING FUEL CONCERNS**

The Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) are urging House leaders to support \$5.1 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program CONEG, which is chaired by Vermont Governor Jim Douglas, says the money is needed to help the most vulnerable low-income households struggling to pay increasingly expensive home energy bills. "No Vermonter should be cold in his or her home this winter, or any winter," said Governor Jim Douglas.

Vermont's LIHEAP program serves about 23,000 households. The state provides the most generous LIHEAP benefit in the country, averaging approximately \$1169 per household. At current funding levels that means the state would have to add an additional \$15 million dollars to fund-- or cut benefits.

The Joint Fiscal Committee has called an emergency meeting at the statehouse to address the issue on Thursday, June 26. VFDA Executive Director Matt Cota will testify. The committee is expected to discuss these topics:

- Conducting a large-scale bulk purchase of heating fuels coordinated on a regional basis.
- New financing options to weatherize their homes and purchase efficient furnaces and other heating appliances.
- Creating "energy banks" using the food bank model.
- Instituting a 4 day work week for schools and state employees.
- Incentives and promotion of wood alternatives and chip production.
- Use of hedging to achieve better prices for Vermonter.

Early timing of LIHEAP payments to assist fuel dealers with cash flow and secure better price.

Meanwhile Vermont House Republicans unveiled a plan this week dubbed the "Harvest to Heat Initiative." The plan calls for wood stoves and wood pellet stoves to be installed in the homes of low income Vermonter. Congressman Peter Welch has also proposed legislation that would provide Vermont with \$15 million in federal grant money to help schools convert their heating systems from oil to wood.

## **HAZMAT**

The Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles recently decided to join nearly 40 other states in the TSA system. VFDA's Montpelier office is the site of the new TSA fingerprinting center for Hazmat endorsement. Drivers will now receive their endorsement in a matter of days, rather than months. The downside is that as of today there is only one location. VFDA is working with DMV, TSA and NEFI to create another Hazmat fingerprinting center in Vermont.

## **NEIGHBOR IN NEED**

The Williston Rotary recently donated \$3000 to the Vermont Fuel Dealers Association Patch Chit/Neighbor-in-Need Program. The fuel assistance fund was established more than two decades ago to provide a 'safety net' to keep Vermonter warm during the cold winter months.

VFDA thanks the Williston Rotary for their continued support of this important program. "Thanks to the Rotary teaming up with fuel dealers, Vermonter in need have another place to turn to this winter," said VFDA Executive Director Matt Cota.

Vermont's heating fuel retailers are continuing a proud Vermont tradition of giving back to the communities where they work and live. The program creates and places pledges, or "chits," usually in 100 gallon fuel increments, in a pool for the use of the Department of Social Welfare's Emergency Fuel Program and other similar programs. For over twenty years, the program has been used as a statewide "safety net" to address the emergency fuel needs of low income Vermonter. None of the funds are used for the administration of the program. VFDA's Fuel Assistance Program is one of several efforts by Vermont's heating fuel retailers to help those who need assistance the most during the winter. VFDA works with community action agencies, Habitat for Humanity, the Vermont Heating Assistance Program, low income advocates and the Vermont Military Families Assistance Fund to distribute fuel to those in need.

## **IN REMEMBRANCE**

One of VFDA's longtime members has passed away. Robert "Bob" Greene, 85, died June 13, 2008. The owner of Greene's Oil in Bennington, Bob was a tremendous supporter of VFDA. When he wasn't selling heating oil, Bob enjoyed boating and watching car racing. At his request, there will be no calling hours or funeral service. In lieu of flowers and donations, prayers and thoughts are appreciated, as well as stories and pictures for a memorial wall at Greene's Oil.

## **VFDA EDUCATION**

Download registration forms at [www.vermontfuel.com](http://www.vermontfuel.com) Or call VFDA at 802-223-7750 and we will send you one.

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BOOK 1 STARTS ON JULY 23!!!!

8 Hour CETP CEU Keep your gas card up to date!  
WHEN: June 27, 2008 WHERE: Dean Center/ Springfield, Vermont

8 Hours of Plumbing Specialist Continuing Education for Vermont PS-1 & PS-2 License Holders  
VTF-15 4 NORA CEU'S & 2 Vermont Oilheat CEU'S  
WHEN: September 18, 2008 -WHERE: Rutland

VFDA Vermont Electrical Class "S" A-1 Automatic Gas or Oil Heating  
Electrical License CEU Course - VTF-12 8 hrs NORA and 8 hrs VT Electrical (A-1) Renewal  
WHEN: September 25, 2008 WHERE: Rutland