

# FIELD NOTES

*News of local, state, federal,  
and utility programs*

## A Column for Program Managers

In case you missed last issue's premiere of "Field Notes," let us re-introduce *Home Energy's* new column for program managers. A forum for exchange between managers of government and utility conservation programs, "Field Notes" will describe various innovative and successful approaches taken by people who've found out what works and what doesn't.

We invite your participation. Tell us your latest success story (or the one about the pitfalls you wish you'd avoided!). Let us hear what you'd like to know more about, so we can research the topic for a future column. Or clue us in on interesting programs you've heard about and think we should cover. Send submissions to: Field Notes Editor, *Home Energy*, 2124 Kittredge St., No. 95, Berkeley, CA 94704, or call (415) 524-5405.

### Maximizing Resources

## Coordinating State, Local, and Utility Programs

A number of local governments, states, and utilities have discovered coordinated residential program delivery—two or more agencies pooling resources to put together one program. They find coordinated programs the best way to stretch funding, streamline operations, and improve service to customers. This is one of the findings of a study published in January by the Alliance to Save Energy (ASE), located in Washington, D.C. Of the



Utility/government coordination in Austin, Texas, helped this homeowner weatherize his home.

more than 60 joint projects identified, approximately half served residential customers.

"Our research uncovered instances such as one state where six different programs funded low-income weatherization and five different programs helped consumers pay fuel bills," explained ASE Project Manager, Paul Johnson. By contrast, "joint projects offer concrete benefits to state and utility participants by streamlining program delivery for both program operators and participants," he stated. Although weatherization coordination is the most common type of joint government/utility project, Johnson discovered a diversity of program models. The report contains examples of each type of program. (Many of the examples have changed form, but each was recently in operation as described.)

### Weatherization Coordination

California, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee all provided examples of weatherization coordination. In California, California and Nevada Community Action Association (CALNEVA), an association of CAPs and other community groups, operated a two-tiered program of utility and state weatherization services. If the household's needs could be met by Pacific Gas and Electric's program, the utility alone funded weatherization services. If the home needed more weatherization than the utility program offers, CALNEVA added federal weatherization measures. Currently, CALNEVA's member agencies continue to use utility and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds in a two-tiered approach.

In Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Electric Company contracts with the state association of community action directors, Pennsylvania Directors Association for Community Action, to coordinate the delivery of utility-funded weatherization. The contractor, through 15 member community action agencies in central and western Pennsylvania, also offers budget counseling, energy assistance, and federally funded weatherization services.

Another example of coordinated weatherization services comes from Tennessee, where the state and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) combine resources. TVA, a federal utility, provides audits to weatherization recipients identified by the state agency. The state pays for the audits. Until recently, the TVA also inspected local agencies' retrofits for the state.

### Percentage-of-Income Programs

Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin all have programs that guarantee low-income residents utility services in return for payments based on percentages of their incomes. The recipients also receive weatherization services and budget counseling and other social service referrals often as well. State regulatory commissions frequently mandate percentage-of-income programs and require utilities to implement them in coordination with local and state agencies.

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### *One-Stop Shopping*

Making it easier for a residential customer to participate in program offerings can be a key to enhancing program participation. In Minnesota, seven different organizations including Minnegasco, the Minneapolis Energy Office, and state agencies combine resources through "Project Choice" to make one-stop counseling for energy assistance, education, and low-cost and major weatherization available to low-income customers.

Maine, through "Weatherize Homes in Maine (WHIME)," has implemented another variation on one-stop shopping. WHIME involved community-based weatherization education workshops to acquaint participants with commercially available weatherization products and utility-sponsored services, such as audits and water-heater blankets. The workshops were offered by local community-education organizations and included a \$75.00 voucher for weatherization materials supplied by local vendors.

In the District of Columbia metropolitan area, Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO), two city agencies, and the Montgomery County (MD) Department of Housing and Community Development formed the "Community Weatherization Fund" to offer one-stop weatherization services, including audits, counseling, assistance in contractor selection, and general technical assistance.

### *Audit/Financing*

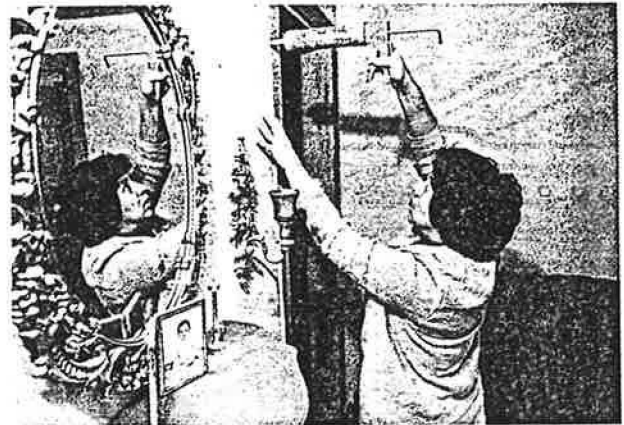
Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio all provide examples of utilities and state agencies cooperating in the delivery of audits and zero- or reduced-interest loans. In Connecticut and Massachusetts, audits are delivered by utility-funded nonprofit organizations (CONNSAVE and MASSAVE). Programs in Ohio and Massachusetts deliver audits through community-based organizations, many of which are federally funded weatherization service providers; in New York audits are delivered by the utilities. Loans typically are made available by the state, most often with oil overcharge funds (see *HE*, Mar/Apr '89, p.7 for background on these funds).

### *Rental Weatherization*

Oregon conservation leaders have established a new approach to market energy conservation to landlords in several locales around the state. In each case, a coordinated marketing effort of federal, state, and utility incentive programs encourages landlords to invest in weatherization. For example, the City of Portland uses a customized approach of incorporating the landlord's interests in unit marketability and comfort into a complete set of retrofit recommendations (see *HE*, Jan/Feb '89, p. 11).

### *Cooperative Agreement*

A contract between a utility and government agency forms an unusual example of utility/government coordination in Austin, Texas. Under a contract with Lonestar



Another Austin homeowner caulking as part of the city's contract to provide conservation services to Lonestar Natural Gas customers.

Natural Gas, the city's Department of Resource Management provides residential weatherization services for the utility's few customers within Austin city limits. The agreement's purpose, in part, is to take advantage of the city's ongoing auditing and retrofitting resources, and to help the utility deliver conservation services the city requires.

### *Vast Opportunities*

"Many managers who have participated in joint projects in the past would like to expand these efforts. Many program managers who have only heard about these projects now want to try them," according to ASE's Johnson. Part of the activity ASE has conducted, under a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, has been technical assistance to help states and utilities identify opportunities for coordination and to design cooperative programs. This work has sent Johnson to Oregon, Maine, and Colorado, where he's helped design joint projects which use energy-efficiency services for economic development. Energy efficiency reduces business operating costs, to help businesses expand and create jobs, or helps marginal enterprises become viable.

"The opportunities for efficiency, effectiveness, and better community relations far outweigh the perceived barriers of a 'non-traditional' approach to service delivery," in most program managers' experience, Johnson says. In addition, ASE is preparing a series of guidebooks to cooperative projects. For a copy of the current study, "Profiles of Energy Efficiency Projects Jointly Operated by States and Utilities," or for information on other aspects of the project, contact: Paul Johnson, Alliance to Save Energy, 1725 K St., N.W., Suite 914, Washington, DC 20006-1401. Tel: (202) 857-0666. ■

### **Acknowledgement**

*Our thanks to the Residential and Commercial Conservation Program, U.S. Department of Energy, for its assistance in the preparation of this column.*