

FINALLY! AN ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM FOR THE REST OF US!

A new program provides free energy audits state wide for RI residents who heat their homes with oil, propane, or other “deliverable fuels.” Until this August, there wasn’t a dedicated energy conservation program in Rhode Island for oil heat customers, other than low-income households, who qualify for the free federal low-income weatherization program. Moderate and higher income oil consumers could get their electricity energy audit from RISE Engineering through National Grid’s program, and they would help you save electricity, but there was very little available to save on heating oil.

Energy Conservation Saves Money

People’s Power & Light has long advocated for a dedicated fund for oil heat consumers, and we were able get some of the electricity fund to help, but at long last we succeeded in getting a sizable pot of the stimulus funding—\$2.3 million—set aside for a new state-wide program that launched Aug. 2. It is also run by National Grid with energy audits provided for free from RISE Engineering, for “one-stop shopping.” We hope that legislation next year will make the fund permanent.

NOT THE BEST YEAR, BUT STILL SAVING

We all got a break this past winter as it was 8% warmer than a “normal” winter. Many of us saved money by conserving energy and the warm weather helped everyone.

The wholesale markets ignored the reduced demand and oil prices made a run to over \$80 per barrel for crude oil. While this pales in comparison to the \$140 reached in the middle of 2008, it

To take part in this new energy program, request a free home energy audit (now called an “energy assessment”) through National Grid’s EnergyWise program at 1-888-633-7947 or www.powerofaction.com/rienergywise. According to the RI Office of Energy Resources, the energy assessment will recommend weatherization measures that may include:

- Insulation of attics, walls, floors, ducts and pipes;
- Air and duct sealing;
- Attic ventilation;
- Installation of programmable thermostats;
- The replacement of heating systems over 15 years old; and/or
- The replacement of water heaters over 10 years old.

Once the home energy assessment is done, residents will be able to select one of nine pre-qualified contractors (listed at www.powerofaction.com/media/pdf/RI_contr_list.pdf) to perform any of the weatherization measures recommended by the audit, or any RI Licensed HVAC contractor (such as your oil dealer) for

is still very high compared to historical averages. The rally drove our prices to almost \$3 per gallon at their peak points in October and April, with our members paying an average of \$2.58 per gallon, our second most expensive winter on a per gallon basis.

Meanwhile, oil dealers realized they were losing volume and hunkered down and lowered their margins to fend off



Don’t sign up for this program if you qualify for fuel assistance—if so, you can get your home completely weatherized for free. If you rent, your landlord will have to apply, but your income level may help your landlord qualify, as well. So talk to your landlord about this terrific program, which helps you afford to live there, and helps them as well, as weatherization increases the value and longevity of their building and reduces tenant turnover. The low-income weatherization program is available through your local Community Action Agency (which you can find by dialing 211 or checking www.energy.ri.gov/lowincome/cap.php).

the heating system work. When the work is complete, residents can receive rebates on 25% of the total cost of recommended energy efficiency improvements for a maximum of \$2,250 per home. ★

further loss of customers. This spawned some local price wars last summer and fall, with many days showing the People’s Power & Light’s price close to the state average instead of our typical 15-30 cents less than regular full service dealers. Ultimately this past heating season, our prices averaged at 21 cents less than the state average, but not as great compared to the 40 cents saved the previous season.

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ALL ABOUT THE DISCOUNT HEATING OIL PROGRAM

To help you decide to renew your *Discount Heating Oil Service* membership for the upcoming heating season, here are some details about the program and how it works.

The program hinges on group buying power: People's Power & Light brings together Rhode Island heating oil consumers to bargain for better prices and service from select full service oil dealers. We act on the members' behalf: our nonprofit negotiates a deal to set the maximum markup an oil dealer may charge over the wholesale price. That's how the *Discount Heating Oil Service* makes home heating more affordable, saving consumers \$150-\$350 a season over the statewide average, every year. That's about 15-30 cents a gallon.

Prices fluctuate daily according to the wholesale price or the market. The set markup gives the dealers a fair price, but makes sure they don't make a windfall when wholesale prices come down: those savings come to you instead. It also ensures members the best fair price in the middle of winter, when people are rarely shopping around (which is why our price might not look as good in September, when it's time to renew, as it will by the end of the heating season).

We do not offer cap prices because, over time, consumers who stay with the program always win. They pay the price of the day without the added expense of the insurance built into locking your price or buying oil up front. The dealers' cap prices are designed to make a profit

no matter what happens to the wholesale price. Consumers who chose a cap, over time pay extra for the dealer taking the risk. Our members don't. ✨

Now is the Time to Sign Up for BUDGET PAYMENT PLANS

To deal with the risk of changing oil prices or a cold winter, members can sign up for their dealers' budget payment plans to spread the cost out over the year and avoid unexpected high bills. This is an optional service and guidelines vary from dealer to dealer. Remember that you have to sign up now, before the heating season begins, in order to participate in these programs.

S P R E A D THE WORD - GET \$50 FOR REFERRALS



As a small nonprofit with a big mission, we rely on the help of our friends to spread the word about Discount Heating Oil. So we are asking you to ask your friends and family to sign up for the program.

Every member who brings in a new member will receive \$50 when the new member takes their first delivery of a tank of oil, as long as it is within one year of your referral.

CHECK OUT YOUR MEMBERS ONLY SITE

People's Power & Light's Members Only internet site was created with you—our member—in mind. It's an exclusive site for you to access your dealer's discounted price, view your dealer's information, report a price discrepancy, and keep track of your membership status. *That's not all.* If you make charitable contributions to our RI Oil Bank, or our green energy programs, *New England GreenStart*SM and *New England Wind Fund*, your Member's Only Site lets you track your federal tax deductible contributions. To access your information go to www.ripower.org/extranet, enter or create your username and password, and check it out. ✨



MEET YOUR LOCAL WIND TURBINES!

Take the chance to see local wind turbines up close and personal this fall at our *Harvest the Wind* turbine festivals. We will gather members and friends at the turbine in Princeton, MA on Sept. 11th and Medford, MA on Oct. 17th for a day of fun and education. Stay tuned for details. ✨

A gathering of people who support the development of wind turbines at the Hull Wind Turbine

HEATING OIL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

IMPORTANT NOTES

1. You can check the status of your membership by visiting our Members Only website, www.ripower.org/extranet. If you wish to change the name or address on your account, we will need additional information to renew your membership. Call our office today at 401.861.6111 for assistance.
2. If you are a member of *New England GreenStart* or *New England Wind Fund* only (not a member of the heating oil program) you do not need to renew.

THREE EASY WAYS TO RENEW YOUR HEATING OIL MEMBERSHIP

1. **Online:** www.ripower.org
2. **Phone:** Call our office at 401.861.6111
3. **Mail:** Fill out the form below and mail to: 17 Gordon Ave., Suite 201, Providence, RI 02905

HEATING OIL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

MEMBER INFORMATION

Name _____ Membership # _____

Mailing Street Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

E-mail (*make sure we have your most recent e-mail*) _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPE

(Please select one. Dues are not tax-deductible and are not refundable.)

\$20 Basic \$10 Fixed Income & Retiree \$45 Three year \$25 Non-residential Customer

Note: If you are a Fuel Assistance Client, please call PP&L(401-861-6111) to find out how you can renew for FREE.

DONATIONS

Yes, I will make a tax-deductible donation to support People's Power & Light Oil Bank for emergency heating assistance.

\$10 \$50 \$100 \$300 \$500 Other \$ _____

PAYMENT

Total amount (membership fee and/or donations) \$ _____

My check is enclosed. Please make checks payable to "PP&L"

Please charge my: Mastercard Discover Visa

Card Number _____ Exp Date _____

CVV no. (3-digit code) _____

Signature _____

Payments to People's Power & Light for membership are not tax-deductible. However, contributions to the People's Power & Light for the Rhode Island Energy Oil Bank are tax-deductible for federal income tax purposes. Dues are non-refundable.

PEOPLE'S Power & Light

Making energy more affordable and environmentally sustainable

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Not the Best Year *(continued from front page)*

Our price-on-the-day program was challenged and we heard from some of our members early last fall expressing their displeasure. However, beginning

in the middle of November the price concerns waned as dealers began to restore their margins. Our price graph illustrates how our savings were the best during the coldest months when we all use the most oil. As usual, once most people stop shopping, the dealer's margins edge upward.

Remember, our program keeps our dealers margins the same all year round. You typically take five deliveries a year and if our price does not seem that great for one given delivery, it won't always prove to be the case. It worked for our members this last winter and it has worked for the past 28 winters.

Heading into this season the price wars have resumed. Please don't be fooled by a one-time price that is the same or less than ours. You may wake up in the cold of winter and realize the \$10 you saved in August is costing you \$30-\$60 in January. ✨

