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Governor Scott Walker Announces Plan to Help Fill Propane Tanks Early for 25,000 Households through State Heating Program

Madison – Governor Scott Walker is encouraging citizens who use propane to heat their homes to fill their fuel tanks early this season. In addition, State energy officials are reaching out to 25,000 households across Wisconsin that participate in the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) to help fill their propane tanks before cold weather sets in.

“While many people may not want to think about winter heating during the warm summer months, customers are generally able to purchase more propane at a lower price in August and September when supply is less in demand,” Governor Walker said. “Weather, grain drying, and several other factors put a strain on supply across the Midwest last winter and some of those same factors could be in play again this heating season. We encourage our citizens to take action now to be better prepared for the upcoming heating season and save money in the process.”

The Department of Administration’s WHEAP program will begin processing applications now (instead of starting on October 1 when the program officially begins) for the 11 percent of WHEAP households that use propane. WHEAP will estimate the amount of heating benefit a customer will receive and then lock in the lower summer price with a propane dealer who will work with the WHEAP customer to establish a future delivery date.

In addition to ensuring propane gets into customer tanks sooner, this will allow the State to potentially purchase approximately 15 percent more propane, resulting in as much as $1 million in savings that could be used to help additional residents in need. Currently, the average propane retail price is $1.69 per gallon compared to an average of $3.04 per gallon that customers paid at the end of February 2014.

To make WHEAP’s propane customers aware of the early application process, the program is mailing letters this week to 25,000 WHEAP participants who use propane to encourage them to complete their applications sooner so their tanks can be filled earlier. Customers can apply at their local WHEAP agency.

Customers benefit from filling their propane tank in the summer:
• Customers are generally able to purchase more fuel at a lower price
• More fuel means customers will have a better supply at their home or business going into the winter
• Retailers will have a better supply to offer customers during the heating season
More efficient utilization of the entire supply chain

During this past heating season, WHEAP assisted 224,731 households with heating assistance. Of that total, 25,628 also received crisis assistance. The WHEAP program runs each year from October 1 to May 15 and makes a payment to the household’s energy supplier to pay for a portion of the heating costs. The amount of the energy assistance benefit varies depending on a variety of factors, including the household’s size, income, and energy costs.

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