



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IT'S NOT COOL TO BE COLD

Ottawa County Community Action Agency announces its recognition of Weatherization Day, proclaimed by Governor Jennifer Granholm to be Tuesday, October 30. The Community Action Agency (CAA) routinely assists qualifying low-income families throughout Ottawa County. The weatherization program provides energy-saving measures such as insulation, caulking and minor home repairs related to energy saving. This year CAA will have available approximately \$350,000 for weatherization use. These monies are grants from the Federal Department of Energy (DOE) and from the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC).



Photo: Dale Congdon helps to weatherize a home. Here he is drilling a hole to install a vent.

A portion of the grant money goes towards monthly energy education classes. These are seminars held in several locations in Ottawa County and are open to the public. The purpose of the seminars is to provide families energy-saving tips which will lower their energy consumption during the year. By lowering their consumption of energy the families will feel less of the predicted increase in utility rates. They can then spend more on necessities like groceries and health care.

Maude Northouse is a recipient of weatherization assistance and went through the process of receiving help last year. "It was a great success; the heating bills were a lot less. The workers who installed the insulation were very professional, courteous and knowledgeable."

"This year we have funding to weatherize about ninety homes," says Susan Cervantes, Program Supervisor, Community Action Agency. To qualify for weatherization assistance, each family must be at or below 200% poverty. For example a family of four must have a combined gross income of \$41,300 or below. A family of three must earn \$34,340 or below. The recipients are required to attend the energy education classes and to implement at least three of the class recommendations.

There are situations where families automatically qualify for weatherization assistance. For example if a family receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI), State Disability Assistance (SDA) or Family Independence Program benefits (FIP) then that family automatically qualifies for weatherization assistance.

The Ottawa County Community Action Agency has been assisting low-income families weatherize their homes since 1986 and has helped approximately 2,000 families save money on their utilities. The annual average number of households receiving assistance is 80. A colder winter than last year's is predicted and because many Ottawa County residents have experienced job loss the Community Action Agency is hoping to reach out to those households who are eligible and assist with weatherization services.