



Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse News

May 2006

This monthly e-mail update is brought to you by HUD's Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse (PHECC). It features news and resources to help public housing authorities manage energy and water costs. To see past issues of this newsletter, and to access more information and tools for public housing authorities, visit the Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse Website at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/phecc/>.

To contact the Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse email pheccinfo@drintl.com or call 1-800-955-2232.

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- Green Power Can Save You... Green
- Resources Available to Address Stretched Operating Budgets

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- AEANYC Energy-Efficient Multifamily Building Operations Training. *May 2 - June 1. Bronx, NY.*
- Delta Institute Energy Performance Contracting Workshop for PHAs. *June 5 - 9, 2006. Chicago, IL. September 18 - 22, 2006. Upstate NY.*

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- Rising Star Housing Authority Taps Alternative Funding to Update HVAC

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Green Power Can Save You... Green

If you're buying [standard power](#) from a utility with a top green power program, you may be paying more than you should.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) annual ranking of top utility programs shows that in 2005, some green power purchasers spent less than standard power purchasers on their utility bills. Visit the Department of Energy's Green Power Network to see if your utility is among the [top ten](#).

Green power is partially or entirely generated from renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind and biomass. Since these sources are not affected by fluctuating fossil fuel prices, green power can be an economical choice.



Wind power generated the cheapest electricity at top utilities, saving their customers up to 0.67 cents per kWh. Source: U.S. Department of Energy

"Higher prices for conventional energy sources are focusing greater consumer attention on renewable energy options," said Blair Swezey, NREL's principal policy advisor.

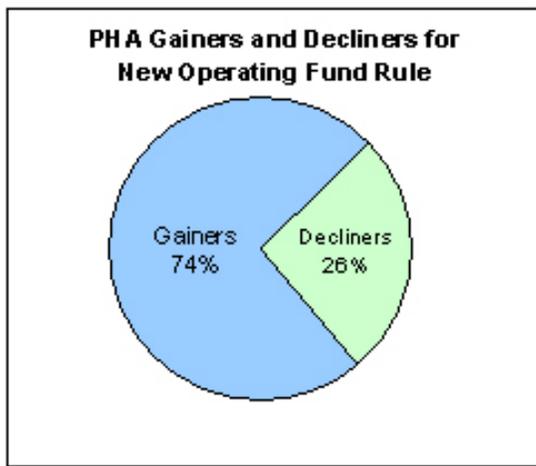
Total utility green power sales reached 2.7 billion kilowatt-hours in 2005, a 36-percent increase, while participation in utility green power programs rose 20 percent over the previous year. Click here to see the [NREL press release](#).

For more information about purchasing green power, download the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) [Guide to Purchasing Green Power](#). Interested PHAs can also partner with the EPA through the [Green Power Partnership Program](#), which offers information on green power, support, and recognition.

Resources Available to Address Stretched Operating Budgets

Housing Authorities nationwide are facing budget shortfalls in fiscal year 2006 due to continuously climbing energy costs. Although HUD's [current method](#) for estimating energy expenses relies on past energy costs, which are accounted for inflation, recent spikes in fuel prices have surpassed predicted needs. Many PHAs are finding it necessary to generate funds by raising rents, where possible, or charging for services. However, these steps do nothing to address energy usage.

PHAs are encouraged to offset high energy prices with energy efficient improvements such as the installation of [ENERGY STAR products](#), [sealing](#) of ductwork, and installation of [high R-value insulation](#). For more information on appropriate energy efficient improvements visit the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing's [Energy Efficient Rehab Advisor](#). Many improvements can be funded through an [Energy Performance Contract](#).



HUD has also recently restructured its operating subsidy distribution formula to better serve the needs of PHAs. According to the formula, which becomes effective January 1, 2007, two-thirds of these authorities will receive larger operating subsidies than they received in 2006. But at least one-third of the authorities will be getting less. Click here for a more detailed breakdown: [New Operating Fund Analysis Report](#).

PHAs slated for cuts can [keep their funding subsidies](#) at 2006 levels if they comply with HUD's new project-based accounting rule for fiscal year 2007. Transitioning to project-based accounting allows the PHA to identify unusually high- or low-cost project expenditures, which enables the PHA to upgrade inefficient, expensive buildings and effectively maintain more profitable ones. For more information on project-based management view HUD's webcast by visiting the [Public Housing Webcasts page](#) and selecting "Asset Management Project Groupings, March 15, 2006".

EVENTS

AEANYC Energy-Efficient Multifamily Building Operations Training

May 2 - June 1, 2006 (Tuesdays and Thursdays)

Bronx, NY

The Association for Energy Affordability is offering a one-month course for multifamily building operation managers on a range of best practices including preventive maintenance, energy efficiency, thermal comfort and proper maintenance of the building envelope. For more information, visit [AEANYC.org](#).

Delta Institute Energy Performance Contracting Workshop for PHAs

June 5 - 9, 2006

Chicago, IL

September 18 - 22, 2006

Upstate NY

Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) is HUD's principal method for PHAs to raise capital both to lower energy costs and make housing more comfortable. This course uses role-plays and a case study approach to give participants the tools to implement EPC. Click here to view the [agenda](#) and [register](#) for this event.

SUCCESS STORIES

Rising Star Housing Authority Taps Alternative Funding to Update HVAC

The PHA in Rising Star, Texas, recently took advantage of a local funding opportunity to complete HVAC upgrades beyond what it could previously afford.

The PHA wanted to improve its inefficient heating furnaces and install central air conditioning in its 22-unit development. The existing heating systems consisted of direct-vented wall-mounted furnaces, fired with natural gas. Rising natural gas prices motivated the PHA to explore more efficient technologies that would lower energy costs, but limited funds dictated that improvements would have to be made a few units at a time.

Rising Star then discovered the [Housing Partnership Program](#), managed by the [Texas State Energy Conservation Office](#) (SECO). This program encourages community and residential involvement in energy efficiency projects through partnerships with local organizations. Typical projects include housing retrofits, model demonstration projects, technical training assistance, and energy education workshops and seminars.



Central A/C units replaced inefficient window units and wall furnaces.

The PHA submitted a proposal to SECO and was awarded \$77,000 to replace its outdated wall-mounted gas furnaces with heat pumps and 12-SEER central air conditioners in all 22 units. The systems, installed in July 2005, have significantly enhanced occupant comfort; residents have already reported that living conditions have greatly improved.

For more information about your state's Energy Office, consult the [National Association of State Energy Officials](#) office listing.

Find proposal writing support at [grants.gov](#) and [The Foundation Center](#), which offers free online tutorials.

ENERGY WATCH

Bulk Purchasing Helps Mitigate High Long-Term Electricity Prices

Reductions in consumption resulting from a mild winter and the moderate summer temperatures forecasted for 2006 have experts predicting less dramatic electricity price escalation than in 2005. However, additional increases in residential electricity prices are expected through at least 2007, and future natural gas and petroleum shocks could push electricity prices even higher.

To save on future energy costs—and lower bills today—consider purchasing [ENERGY STAR qualifying products in bulk](#). Through bulk purchasing, you can negotiate a discounted purchasing price over retail.



Conduct a lifecycle costing and payback analysis to determine if installation of ENERGY STAR qualified equipment is cost effective. A wide variety of calculators are available from:

- [ENERGY STAR](#)
- [Department of Energy](#)
- [Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing](#)

ENERGY STAR® IN FOCUS

Save Energy, Cool Your World

It's time to get ready for the summer heat; ENERGY STAR's Cool Your World campaign offers strategies for efficient residential cooling. Launching May 29, the campaign offers a variety of summer savings tips that help you save energy and money, extend the life of your appliances, and keep comfortable all summer long:

- [Maintain your equipment](#) to prevent future problems and unwanted costs. This includes servicing equipment annually. It may be difficult to schedule a check-up in summer when service providers are the busiest, so aim for spring or fall.
- Consider installing [programmable thermostats](#), which can save \$100 a year per household in energy costs.
- [Replace damaged caulk around windows, doors and add insulation](#) where needed.
- [Check ducts for leaks](#). Gaps or holes in the ductwork waste a lot of energy and can result in poor indoor air quality.



Other tips are available in two ENERGY STAR factsheets: [Cool Your World with ENERGY STAR](#) and [Top Five Ways to Save](#). Factsheets are available in English and Spanish on the [ENERGY STAR Website](#).

Upgrading inefficient cooling equipment can also have a large impact on energy usage. Some local organizations offer rebates or other incentives for qualifying products. To search for special offers in your area, visit the ENERGY STAR [Rebate Locator](#). Also check "Websites Worth a Click," below. For more details on increasing the energy efficiency of your entire HVAC system, download the [ENERGY STAR Guide to Energy-Efficient Heating and Cooling](#).

State Incentives Database Now Includes Energy Efficiency

The Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy ([DSIRE](#)) is now also an excellent source of information on energy efficiency incentives. DSIRE has expanded its directory to include state and federal incentives for energy efficiency upgrades, purchases of energy-efficient products or systems, and construction of new, energy-efficient buildings. DSIRE is a project of the [Interstate Renewable Energy Council](#).