



Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse News

February 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.

News:

- Benchmarking Data Collection Begins in Eight Regions This Month
- PIH Extends Energy Performance Contract Term to 20 Years

Events:

- Energy Performance Contracting Workshop at ACI. May 23. Austin, Texas. *Attend this workshop and many other sessions to help you efficiently operate and maintain your buildings.*

Success Stories:

- Milwaukee HOPE VI Project Named One of America's Best New Developments

Energy Watch

- Natural Gas Prices High Now But Expected to Fall

Websites Worth a Click

- Do-It-Yourself Customized Energy Solutions: Advice in Minutes

Benchmarking Data Collection Begins in Eight Regions This Month

This month, PIH will begin collecting building and energy data from eight of the ten HUD regions for its Benchmarking Utility Consumption and Cost System (BUCCS). This system will enable each PHA to:

- Obtain quick and accurate information, free of any commercial interest, on the energy performance of its buildings
- Compare its buildings' energy consumption to those of other PHAs
- Target building improvements that reduce utility consumption

In 2005, PIH collected data from Regions II and III. With this data, PIH was able to develop the basic benchmarking model, which proved to be a reliable tool for comparing energy use among Region II and III buildings.

This year, the model will be expanded to include all PHA properties. PHAs in the remaining eight regions will receive an email with further information about the data collection. The PHAs will be asked to fill out an online HUD Benchmarking form about buildings in their residential housing stock. Building characteristics should be available from previous energy audits or other building assessment programs. Utility usage data can come from current bills or utility baselines developed during previous energy audits. Only one year's worth of utility information is required.

For more information about this project, contact John Miller at john_h_miller@hud.gov.

PIH Extends Energy Performance Contract Term to 20 Years

PIH [Notice 2006-06](#), issued January 19, 2006, extends the allowable term of Energy Performance Contracts (EPCs) from 12 to 20 years. As stated in the Federal Energy Bill, the contracting period is being lengthened to allow longer payback energy-saving measures such as windows, heating system replacements, wall insulation, site-based generation and renewable energy.

The allowance of a 20-year EPC term makes contracts with smaller PHAs more appealing to ESCOs.

Even though the Notice has been issued, the regulation found at [24 CFR 990.185](#) has not yet been changed. This means that PHAs wishing to enter into contracts exceeding 12 years must request a waiver. Waiver requests can be submitted through local Field Offices to the Assistant Secretary of PIH for final approval. Current 12-year contracts cannot be extended by this new mandate.

Some of the topics addressed in the Notice are:

- Energy projects that extend up to 20 years involve long-term, strategic planning. Asset-based management, a PIH goal, emphasizes this type of planning for each separate project in a PHA's housing stock.
- Projects that extend up to 20 years will require some equipment to be replaced during the contract period, which must be part of the EPC.

What Temperature is Best for Water Heating?

Set the thermostat on water heaters to 120 degrees (or "low"). You won't sacrifice comfort, but you will save money, and prevent scalding burns in the kitchen or bath. For every 10 degrees you lower the thermostat, you will save 3-5% in energy costs.

[Insulate water heater tanks and pipes](#) to get more heat from the tank to the tap.

- Savings need to last over the entire term of the energy project. Maintenance is a very important contributor to the persistence of savings and the life of equipment.
- Field Offices can expect to spend more time reviewing 20-year projects to ensure proper risk management.

Send inquiries about the Notice to PIH's John Miller at john_h._miller@hud.gov.

EVENTS

Energy Performance Contracting Workshop at ACI

May 23, 2006

Austin, Texas

The 2006 ACI Home Performance Conference has added a four-hour workshop session on Energy Performance Contracting for PHAs. Formerly known as Affordable Comfort, the ACI Home Performance Conference is one of the largest conferences on energy efficiency practices that features affordable housing.

[Learn more.](#)

SUCCESS STORIES

Milwaukee HOPE VI Project Named One of America's Best New Developments

Last fall, the Sierra Club named the Milwaukee, Wisconsin HOPE VI development, Highland Park, one of the nation's best new developments. Highland Park is a \$19M project that includes both a mid-rise apartment building and single-family homes.

Highland Gardens, a mid-rise apartment building in the community, features the nation's largest residential green roof, which is covered with plants. Besides the aesthetic value, green roofs offer lower energy consumption, longer roof life, storm-water reduction, and improved air quality. The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) estimates that the roof will lower the building's cooling costs by 12% and heating costs by 10%.



A green roof reduces the amount of heat the roof absorbs and reflects in summertime—a cause of poor air quality in many dense urban areas.

The single-family homes that surround Highland Gardens feature [ENERGY STAR](#) qualified heating, ventilation, cooling, windows, and refrigerators. The homes are insulated with [soy-based insulation](#), which is mold resistant and does not release toxic emissions.

To learn more about Highland Park, contact Glen Radford at HACM at (414) 286-8230 or gradfo@hacm.org, or [view the press release](#). [PDF]

To learn more about green roofs, check out these [upcoming green roof events](#).

ENERGY WATCH

Natural Gas Prices High Now But Expected to Fall

Natural gas prices, which averaged \$9.00 per thousand cubic feet (mcf) in 2005, are projected to average \$8.87 in 2006 and \$8.70 in 2007, says the Energy Information Administration (EIA). On average, households heated primarily with natural gas will likely spend \$178 (24 percent) more for fuel this winter than last winter.

A PHA can enter into a contract to buy natural gas at a specific price in the future. This type of buying is referred to as futures. According to the [EIA's Short-Term Energy Outlook](#) for February 7, concerns about future supply tightness are keeping future prices high but if demand weakens prices could see a sharp decrease. The future prices are currently at about \$8.00 to \$9.00 per mcf. [Learn more about natural gas and futures contract prices.](#)

WEBSITES WORTH A CLICK

Do-It-Yourself Customized Energy Solutions: Advice in Minutes

Have a few minutes? HUD's [Energy Efficient Rehab Advisor](#) easily and quickly recommends energy-saving remodeling projects based on your building type, climate, and estimated age. For each project, the tool lists the added cost, expected savings, and payback time. Be sure to check out the Rehab Calculator, which you'll find on the left after you enter your initial specifications. The Calculator asks more in-depth questions about your project and yields more tailored results.

A wide range of energy calculators can also be found at <http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/calculators/homes.cfm>. Use these tools to calculate savings from appliances, insulation, and water-saving technologies.

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