



Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse News

January 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:

- ACEEE Names the Best Low-Income Energy Efficiency Programs
- Louisiana Will Rebuild to International Codes

Events:

- RESNET Building Performance Conference. February 27 - March 1. San Antonio, Texas. *Learn about code compliance and ENERGY STAR Qualified Homes.*

Success Stories:

- Tacoma Housing Authority Installs Energy-Efficient Products, Saves \$150 Per Unit Annually

Technology Tip:

- Evaporative Coolers: A PIH-Approved Alternative to Air Conditioners

Websites Worth a Click

ACEEE Names the Best Low-Income Energy Efficiency Programs

Many low-income individuals who receive HUD assistance also qualify for other low-income energy efficiency programs, but these programs vary widely. The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) report, "[Meeting Essential Needs: The Results of a National Search for Exemplary Utility-Funded Low-Income Energy Efficiency Programs](#)," [large PDF file] provides a detailed list of the best programs nationwide.

For more leveraging opportunities, see these Websites:

- The Department of Energy's (DOE) [Weatherization Assistance Program](#) is the nation's longest running energy efficiency program.
- DOE has compiled [incentives offered by utilities](#), such as energy efficiency and load management programs.

Louisiana Will Rebuild to International Codes

Under new legislation, the 11 parishes hit hardest by the hurricanes have up to 90 days to begin implementing and enforcing the wind and flood provisions of the International Building and Residential Codes. The code requires homes and businesses built along the Gulf Coast to withstand winds of at least 130 miles per hour.

The codes will be required for all buildings built or rebuilt statewide starting in 2007. Read the [press release](#).

More hurricane rebuilding information is available from these resources:

- A new DOE [Disaster Recovery and Building Reconstruction Website](#)
- [HUD's Hurricane Resource Webpage](#)
- [PHECC Information on Mold Mitigation and Hurricane Rebuilding](#)
- [Hurricane Shutter Guide](#)
- [Practices for Improving Hurricane Resistance from the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing](#)
- "[Managing Hurricane Recovery for Healthy and Affordable Communities](#)"

Fire Up Your Furnace Knowledge

- If your furnace was manufactured before 1992, it is up to 40% less efficient than a new, ENERGY STAR qualified furnace.
- New but poorly maintained furnaces are as costly to operate as older furnaces.

Wondering if it's time to replace your heating system or simply looking to improve its efficiency? Look to [ACEEE's Consumer Guide](#). The guide also offers tips on refrigerator selection, insulation, and choosing a contractor. A "Home Energy Checklist for Action" lists ways to save energy today, this month, and this year.

More hurricane rebuilding information is available from these resources:



Consider Rebuilding with Mold-Resistant Drywall: Coated drywall with a gypsum core will not absorb moisture as easily as typical gypsum board. [Learn more.](#)

RESNET Building Performance Conference

February 27 - March 1

San Antonio, Texas

Sessions at this building performance and home energy rating conference will cover:

- Energy efficient-opportunities presented by the new federal tax credits
- Changes to the ENERGY STAR Qualified Homes Program and the national home energy rating standards in 2006
- Innovative business and marketing strategies
- Financing
- Energy code compliance

The conference will also feature sessions focused on technical and business development issues associated with the Environmental Protection Agency's program for existing homes, "Home Performance with ENERGY STAR." [Register](#) by January 27 and get an "early bird" discount.

SUCCESS STORIES

Tacoma Housing Authority Installs Energy-Efficient Products, Saves \$150 Per Unit Annually

Residents of the new HOPE VI development, Salishan, are saving money thanks to energy-saving features and some help from the power company.



Approximately ten percent of the Hope VI units were completed in October 2005. The THA expects all 1,270 units to be finished by 2010.

The Tacoma, Washington Housing Authority expects that the development's ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washers, refrigerators, dishwashers, and vinyl-clad insulated windows will save residents an average of \$150 per year in utility costs. To save on lighting costs, 50% of the lighting is fluorescent. In addition, the THA has partnered with its local power company, Tacoma Power, to hold meetings promoting the use of fluorescent lighting fixtures. Tacoma Power has provided compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) to residents.

Get More for Less: Buy in Bulk

Find energy-conscious [lighting and electrical distributors](#) or take advantage of special [refrigerator bulk purchasing](#) options for PHAs.

The THA is applying for a 2-star rating from [Built Green](#). A Built Green home typically has lower operating costs because of more efficient energy features, such as extra insulation, efficient lighting and appliances, and the use of [natural daylighting techniques](#).

For more information, contact Tina Hansen at (253) 207-4434 or thansen@tacomahousing.org.

TECHNOLOGY TIP

Evaporative Coolers: A PIH-Approved Alternative to Air Conditioners

There is a longstanding PIH policy that air conditioning cannot be included in utility allowance calculations. However, PIH does not consider evaporative coolers to be air conditioners. This means that the corresponding utility expenses are [eligible operating expenses](#).

Evaporative coolers, also known as swamp coolers, work by drawing fresh outside air through wet pads. The air is cooled and blown into the house. Evaporative coolers use substantially less electricity than conventional air conditioners and some have a lower first cost. And, unlike conventional air conditioners, they do not use environmentally damaging refrigerants.

There are two main types of evaporative coolers: direct and two-stage. Both systems add humidity to the air and are not appropriate for climates where extra humidity would be unwelcome. Two-stage coolers operate at a lower efficiency than direct but provide cooler and drier air. Two-stage coolers work well in climates where temperatures regularly surpass 100 degrees.



Contact your utility to see if it offers incentives for evaporative coolers.

Evaporative coolers can be used as the sole cooling system in a home or in combination with a conventional air conditioner. However, conventional air conditioners should not be operated simultaneously with evaporative coolers because air conditioners dehumidify while evaporative coolers humidify, and the two systems will work in opposition.

Read more about evaporative coolers on [PHECC's Cost Reduction Tool Box](#) and [Toolbase](#).

WEBSITES WORTH A CLICK

Public Housing Authority Toolbox

The [Public Housing Authority Toolbox](#) provides information to help PHAs understand energy- and resource-efficiency issues and make informed decisions about retrofits and product selection. The site includes fact sheets on weatherization, appliances, lighting, low-VOC paint, and heating and cooling. Case studies, information on financing options, guidance on energy audits, and links to other useful sites are also featured.

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