

JAMES H. DOUGLAS
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
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Contact: Stephen Wark, Department of Public Service
(802) 828-4021

Fuel Resource Network Operational

Montpelier, Vt. –The Vermont Department of Public Service (DPS), Vermont 2-1-1, and Efficiency Vermont activated the network for service referrals on food and fuel Tuesday at 7:45 AM, Governor Jim Douglas announced.

Governor Douglas said the resource network—part of the Fuel and Food Partnership he announced two weeks ago—closely connects 2-1-1, DPS and Efficiency Vermont in a coordinated drive to provide assistance and information to Vermonters who have concerns about increasing fuel and food.

“Vermont is fighting back against skyrocketing energy costs. While we cannot control the price of a barrel of oil, there are things we must do here at home to help the most vulnerable and ease the pressure on middle income Vermonters,” Governor Douglas said. “Our Fuel and Food Partnership is a comprehensive initiative to help Vermonters address increasing heating, gasoline and food costs. Together, we will leave no stone unturned and marshal every available resource to help Vermonters tackle these issues.”

Douglas’ partnership is being spearheaded by Lt. Governor Brian Dubie and Secretary of Transportation Neale Lunderville. “We are working hard now to prepare for record high home heating fuel prices so that no Vermonters are left in the cold,” Dubie said.

The majority of calls today have focused on financial assistance for heating and home weatherization, the Governor said. Vermonters have been encouraged to use the 2-1-1 system for referrals to the wide array of services throughout the state.

MaryEllen Mendl, program director for Vermont 2-1-1, advised they have seen a dramatic increase in calls for service.

One way for Vermonters to get more for their dollar is to consider investing in home performance audits and thermal insulation in their homes. Eric Rutz, Customer Service Manager with Efficiency Vermont, explains, “...the homes in our state are among the

oldest in the nation, which means there is tremendous opportunity to enhance the efficiency of the structures. A home performance audit will help property owners better understand where they can obtain the most value for their money – insulation and compact florescent light bulbs are an affordable way to start saving immediately. The best single thing people can do to protect against future energy price increases is to lower their overall energy usage any way they can.”

Today’s activation of the enhanced network will endeavor to provide better access and information for consumers. By calling 2-1-1, Vermonters will have access to a variety of resources, many of which can help them make decisions on how to best deal with the challenges of the next heating season.

The Fuel and Food Partnership will be releasing information on additional resources—such as low and no interest loans—as these new programs come on line.

A website specific to this initiative will be online on Thursday, July 3rd, 2008 at 1:00 PM. The website will act as an additional portal for Vermonters, so they can access the same information call takers provide on the telephone.

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