

Office of Representative James E. Vallee
State House, Room 238

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CONTACT:

Craig Carey

(617) 722- 2380

**Representative Vallee Encourages Residents to Contact Energy Bucks
to Stay Warm**

Energy efficiency and cost-saving services available to qualified individuals

(BOSTON) — Burdened by the downturn in the economy, many more Franklin area residents are worried about how they will keep their homes warm this winter. To help constituents stay warm, Representative Vallee is encouraging them to contact Energy Bucks (www.energybucks.com) to see what energy efficiency and cost-saving services they qualify for.

“With the current economic climate, this winter is going to be terribly difficult for low-income and working families, and the elderly trying to heat their homes,” said Representative Vallee. Vallee continued, “The frigid weather has set in and we want to spread the word that help is available so that families can stay warm.”

Energy Bucks is an integrated campaign that creates “one-stop-shopping” for energy assistance services, enabling Massachusetts residents to better understand and apply for programs that can help them manage their energy costs.

“Many people go without help simply because they don’t know about all the great programs available to them,” said Elliott Jacobson, chairman of the Low-Income Affordability Network (LEAN). “Even those who already receive fuel assistance may qualify for a discount utility rate or energy efficiency services.”

Energy efficiency services are available to families at little or no cost depending on their income. Typically, a family of four can qualify for some form of assistance or energy efficiency services if their income is less than \$4,124.

These services can help save qualified families up to 30 percent on their energy bills by insulating and weatherizing their homes, repairing or replacing a heating system, receiving discount rates for electric and gas, installing energy efficient appliances and obtaining fuel assistance. By spreading the word about the resources available, Energy Bucks links residents to programs that will help them stretch their dollars as the weather gets colder and budgets get tighter.

While this year's fuel assistance benefit has increased, providing roughly 10 weeks of heat to oil customers versus last year's average of 7 weeks, there are also actions residents themselves can take to reduce their energy use and stretch their dollars. Simple steps like taking showers versus baths, which use 40 percent less hot water, and turning off and unplugging all TV's and computers when not in use, can make a real difference in energy bills. The Energy Bucks website – www.energybucks.com - has more cost-saving tips.

The Representative is open to any questions and can be contacted at his State House Office at 617-722-2380 or e-mail at Rep.JamesVallee@hou.state.ma.us.

About Energy Bucks

Energy Bucks is an integrated campaign combining grassroots outreach, community-based activities and advertising to build awareness of the fuel assistance, discount rates and energy efficiency services available to income-eligible families. Energy Bucks is sponsored by Massachusetts utilities including National Grid, NSTAR Electric & Gas, Unitil, Western Massachusetts Electric Company, Berkshire Gas, Bay State Gas, and the Cape Light Compact in collaboration with the Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP) and the Low-Income Energy Affordability Network (LEAN). To find out if you qualify for assistance, visit www.energybucks.com or call 1-866-LESS-COST.

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