

New year brings heating hope from HEAT New Mexico

(ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.) – With the arrival of 2016, an additional source of heating assistance is available to New Mexico Gas Company customers having trouble paying their winter heating bills.

HEAT New Mexico, a charitable heating assistance fund that helps income-qualifying New Mexicans pay their natural gas heating bills, began accepting applications for assistance this week. The fund is sponsored by NMGC and supported through contributions by customers, employees and company shareholders. The program, administered throughout the state by the Salvation Army, provides assistance until its funds are depleted.

"Natural gas prices are at unusually low levels this month, but cold winter temperatures drive up both consumption and monthly heating bills – inevitably causing hardship for some customers," said Tommy Sanders, vice president of Customer and Support Services. "HEAT New Mexico is one important way we provide assistance to customers in need."

During the last heating season, HEAT New Mexico provided help to 5,212 New Mexicans in 2,418 households. The assistance totaled \$290,255, comprised of \$140,255 from donations by customers and employees and \$150,000 in contributions by NMGC. Because NMGC covers the administrative costs of running the fund, all donations went directly to help New Mexicans in need.

To apply for help, customers must:

- First apply for assistance from the state Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which is administered by the New Mexico Human Services Department and various tribal and pueblo authorities, and then
- Visit any Salvation Army office or participating HEAT New Mexico provider, bringing with them a valid identification, a letter from LIHEAP certifying they applied for LIHEAP benefits, and a copy of their current NMGC bill.

NMGC's website includes additional information on both [LIHEAP](#) and [HEAT New Mexico](#).

Customers wanting to donate to HEAT New Mexico can do so by making a notation on the payment stub of their monthly bill and adding the donation to their monthly payment – or by [completing and returning a form](#) to make an automatic monthly donation.

New Mexico Gas Co., the largest natural gas distribution utility in New Mexico, is part of the TECO Energy family of companies. New Mexico Gas serves more than 515,000 customers across New Mexico. TECO Energy Inc. (NYSE: TE) is an energy-related holding company with regulated electric and gas utilities in Florida and New Mexico: Tampa Electric, Peoples Gas System and New Mexico Gas Co.