

Local program fills fuel assistance gap

Rutland, Vermont - December 12, 2010

Last year Congress granted the Green Mountain State 25 Million dollars for heating assistance. This year, the state received 14 million dollars, while also raising the income level allowed to receive this assistance. Now a new local program is aiming to help fill the gap.

A Rutland family received some much needed fuel assistance Saturday afternoon -- and filling their tank was a familiar face.

"It is important that Vermonters who need fuel to know there is some help out there," said Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vermont). Congressman Welch joined a local fuel dealer to deliver 150 gallons of free fuel.

"This particular customer has been with our company for fifty years," said Chris Keyser with Keyser Energy.

"There is a whole group of people here in Vermont that are too proud to ask for help. Often times these small programs, like split the ticket, are there to help those in need who have not been able to, or have not accessed government assisted programs," said Matt Cota with the Vermont Fuel Dealers Association.

"The person worked all her life and now has retired into the family home and as she said, she used to have some savings, but now it is gone," Keyser said.

Saturday's delivery was made possible through donations to the "Split the Ticket" program through the Vermont Fuel Dealers Association.

"When people donate a dollar to Split the Ticket, I make sure that local companies will donate a dollars worth of fuel," Cota said.

"We pay half for the delivery and the Vermont Fuel Dealers Association pays for the other half," Keyser said.

Saturday's drop off was the first of six scheduled in Rutland -- many more are planned across the entire state.

"This is the last line. We have the states support and crisis fuel and several others, but this is smaller scale to help the people we know are really in need of some help," Keyser said.

"As it stands right now we will deliver over 6-thousand gallons of free heating fuel this winter," Cota said.

You can help Vermonters heat their homes by donating to the [Split the Ticket](#) program or if you know of a local friend or neighbor who needs a little help heating their home this winter you can call your local fuel dealer and donate some money to help cover their costs.

[Molly Smith](#) - WCAX News