

## Vermont heating oil running about \$2.70 a gallon

October 12, 2010

The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) is scheduled to release its winter fuel outlook in Washington, DC, on October 13, 2010.

While the EIA's survey provides an overview for the country, it does not provide specific details of what's happening in Vermont. For instance, the last EIA update in July suggested that oil would be over \$3 a gallon heading into winter, which is not the case. The most recent survey from the Vermont Department of Public Service finds that fuel oil is averaging \$2.70 a gallon, which on a BTU basis is price comparable to natural gas and wood pellets. Electric heat, on the other hand, costs nearly twice as much as oil heat, according to the Vermont Fuel Dealers Association.

Oil heat consumers can save even more on winter heating costs, the VFDA states, by tuning up their heating systems now, as well as taking other simple steps to conserve energy. Today's oil furnaces are highly efficient, but an annual tune-up keeps existing equipment functioning at top performance. Properly maintained

### HEAT SAVING TIPS:

- Get a heating system tune-up — it will ensure you get the maximum performance out of every drop of heating oil burned.
- Open shades and drapes when the sun is out to help warm your home, and close them when the sun goes down.
- Turn back the thermostat at night or when you are away from home; for every degree you lower your thermostat for 8 hours or more each day, you'll save 2 percent on your heating bill.
- Insulate pipes to guard against heat loss and prevent them from freezing.
- Stop drafts by eliminating any gaps between your door and the threshold. Use a seal that can be attached to the bottom of the door — it should brush up against the floor to seal up the threshold.
- Caulk or re-caulk exterior spaces between the windows and walls of your home.
- Close your kitchen vent, fireplace damper and closet doors when not in use.
- Remove air conditioning window units, or cover them to keep cold air outside.
- Keep radiators and registers free of dust for top efficiency.
- Replace heating systems that are more than 20 years old.
- Upgrade your oil furnace or boiler — modern versions can cut costs by as much as 15 percent.
- Make sure you have good insulation on exterior walls, ceilings with cold spaces above, and floors with cold spaces below.

boilers and furnaces can operate at higher temperatures while burning less fuel—which can reduce heating bills by up to 10 percent.

“Tuning up heating systems before winter is a great way for consumers to lower their heating costs, conserve energy, and help the environment,” said VFDA Executive Director Matt Cota.

Most Vermont homes - over 139,000 (56 percent) - are still heated with oil. Data from the Energy Information Administration show that heating oil inventories are 17 percent above their five -year average. The majority of Vermont’s heating oil comes from the United States and Canada.