

News Release

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Program Helps Oregonians Replace Old Woodstoves

Hundreds of households in Harney, Klamath, Lake, and Lane counties are making the switch to cleaner, more efficient heat thanks to a woodstove replacement program that reduces or eliminates the cost to homeowners in those areas.

As stagnant air conditions resulted in burning bans and air quality warnings across much of the state this week, some Oregonians had one less thing to worry about: their heat source. That's because these households have taken advantage of a program to help them replace inefficient old woodstoves with EPA-certified stoves and alternative heat systems.

The woodstove replacement program provides rebates up to \$1,000 toward the cost of swapping an uncertified woodstove for a certified one or for alternative heat sources such as pellet stoves and gas, electric, and propane heaters. The program completely covers the cost for qualifying low-income households.

Using \$2 million in federal stimulus funds supplied by the Oregon Department of Energy's State Energy Program, the Department of Environmental Quality has partnered with local agencies to help areas hit hard by wood-smoke air pollution, including parts of Harney, Klamath, Lake, and Lane counties.

Since the replacement program got rolling in October, approximately...

- ...**80** households have replaced woodstoves with cleaner, more efficient heating systems
- ...**230** households are in the process of replacing their stoves
- ...**500** more applications are being reviewed
- ...**80%** of changeouts have been for low-income families

DEQ's local partners run the program in each of the target areas. These agencies take and review applications, award rebates and work with local contractors to perform the work.

“Smoke from woodstoves can be a health hazard,” said Air Quality Specialist Larry Calkins, adding that uncertified woodstoves produce approximately 70 percent more pollution than today’s cleaner, certified woodstoves.

“Certain weather conditions in these communities trap the smoke at ground level, where people breathe particles into their lungs,” Calkins said, adding that studies have linked smoke pollution to a variety of problems including coughing, asthma, bronchitis, and irregular heartbeat. “By replacing old, inefficient woodstoves, we anticipate a significant reduction in smoke in these areas.”

Besides improving air quality, certified woodstoves and alternative heat systems can provide substantial cost savings through efficient use of fuel. Some older woodstoves waste about 60 percent of the fuel they burn. The replacement program also provides an affordable way for area residents to comply with an Oregon law that requires uncertified woodstoves to be removed when a house is sold.

The woodstove replacement program is first come, first served. It continues until funds are depleted or February 1, 2012, whichever comes first.

“We’ve had a great response so far,” Calkins said, explaining that about half of the available money has already been awarded.

For more information, or to apply for a woodstove replacement rebate, interested homeowners should contact their local agency:

Klamath Falls and **Lakeview** area residents should call the South Central Oregon Economic Development District at 541-884-5593.

Oakridge-Westfir area residents should call the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency at 541-736-1056.

Burns/Hines area and **Burns-Paiute Reservation** residents should call the Harney County Senior and Community Services at 541-573-6024.

For general information, visit DEQ’s website at www.deq.state.or.us/recovery/stimulusFunding.htm and click on “Woodstove Changeout Rebates.”

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