

NEWS



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Orange County Executive

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10-13-11 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

This week I had the pleasure of speaking to the members of the Orange County Chamber of Commerce at their monthly membership breakfast meeting. It was nice to see so many friendly, familiar faces in the audience and share with them an update of the many things happening in Orange County Government.

We are fortunate here in Orange County to have what I believe is the finest Chamber of Commerce in all of New York State. Under the direction of Chamber president, Dr. John D'Ambrosio, and his leadership team, the Orange County Chamber of Commerce truly advocates for the businesses in our community and strives each and every day to help these businesses grow and thrive through an abundance of programs, services, and networking opportunities.

Along with the County budget and my annual address to the Chamber, October brings with it the arrival of cooler temperatures and the start of the home heating season. With the ever increasing costs for fuel and utilities, heating one's home is a real challenge for some people these days. But it's a necessity one really can't do without. If you, or someone you know, will have trouble meeting home energy needs this winter, be sure to tell them about HEAP – the Home Energy Assistance Program – a federally-funded program that assists eligible households. The Orange County Department of Social Services will begin taking applications on November 16.

Eligibility for HEAP is based on one's income and housing situation. Total gross monthly income for a household must be at, or below, \$2,146 for a family of one, up to \$4,127 for a family of four. Eligible families may qualify for seasonal financial assistance in the amount of \$125 to \$550 depending on household size and monthly gross income. For information on how and where to apply, call 291-2002.

We are committed to helping Orange County's families with their home heating costs through HEAP and other energy services that reduce energy utilization. For more information regarding weatherization, energy savings, and energy services offered throughout the County, visit the Social Services department page on the County website at www.orangecountygov.com and click the link for Home Energy Assistance Program. Here you'll find an on-line version of the Orange County Energy Services Guide, as well as a slideshow on HEAP, and tips to save money by reducing energy usage.

A few helpful tips you'll find there to help you save energy, and money, include the following:

- Seal leaks in your home, especially at windows and doors. Caulk or insulate where possible.
- Invest in a programmable thermometer and keep it set at 68*
- Regularly clean and tune your heating system to maintain operating efficiency
- Insulate your hot water heater and keep it set at 115*
- Wrap your pipes (hot and cold) to prevent heat loss and freezing.

And, of course, let's remember one of the easiest and most effective tips of all, my favorite, don't turn up the thermostat – put on a sweater! You'll be amazed at what a difference it can make in your consumption, and your bill, when you put a few common sense energy saving practices into place.

Until next week, best wishes for good health and happiness,

Edward A. Diana, County Executive