

**Sarah Louise Hannah  
1223 Hauser Blvd.  
Helena, MT 59601  
449-4598**

**3 February 2005  
RE: Utility Bills**

**My name is Sarah Louise Hannah. I am well educated and self-employed, using diversified talents that I always believed would see me through the ups and downs of fickle market times. However, never have I seen an across-the-board hit against my ability to earn a decent living as I have with the deregulation of utilities.**

**I work out of my home. I had an energy audit two years before deregulation and have attended to the recommendations, including replacing doors and windows.**

**At the time deregulation was announced, I read in the paper that the average home owner could expect bills to increase an average \$20 a month. Wanting to keep that \$20 in my pocket, I turned my heat down two degrees, used less gas and electricity and still saw an increase in my monthly bill. To summarize, there have been months I use less energy than the previous month and have seen as much as a \$50 increase. This past month, with the colder weather, I used more gas and electricity. My power bill hit an all time high of \$300.**

**In reviewing my energy bills, I've noticed that the statements reflect a varying number of days for the period. This past month, the \$300 statement reflected 36 days. During the warmer summer months, the number of days reflected in the billing is often times less than 30 days. I'm sorry, but this doesn't make sense to me.**



**It isn't just that I'm facing high utility bills. Parents of my voice students, also hit with uncontrollable escalating expenses, have cut back from four lessons a month to three or two. One mother, who is also self-employed, has gone from paying tuition at the beginning of the month to only sending her daughter when she can afford lessons and paying for each lesson at that time. Her daughter came for one lesson last month.**

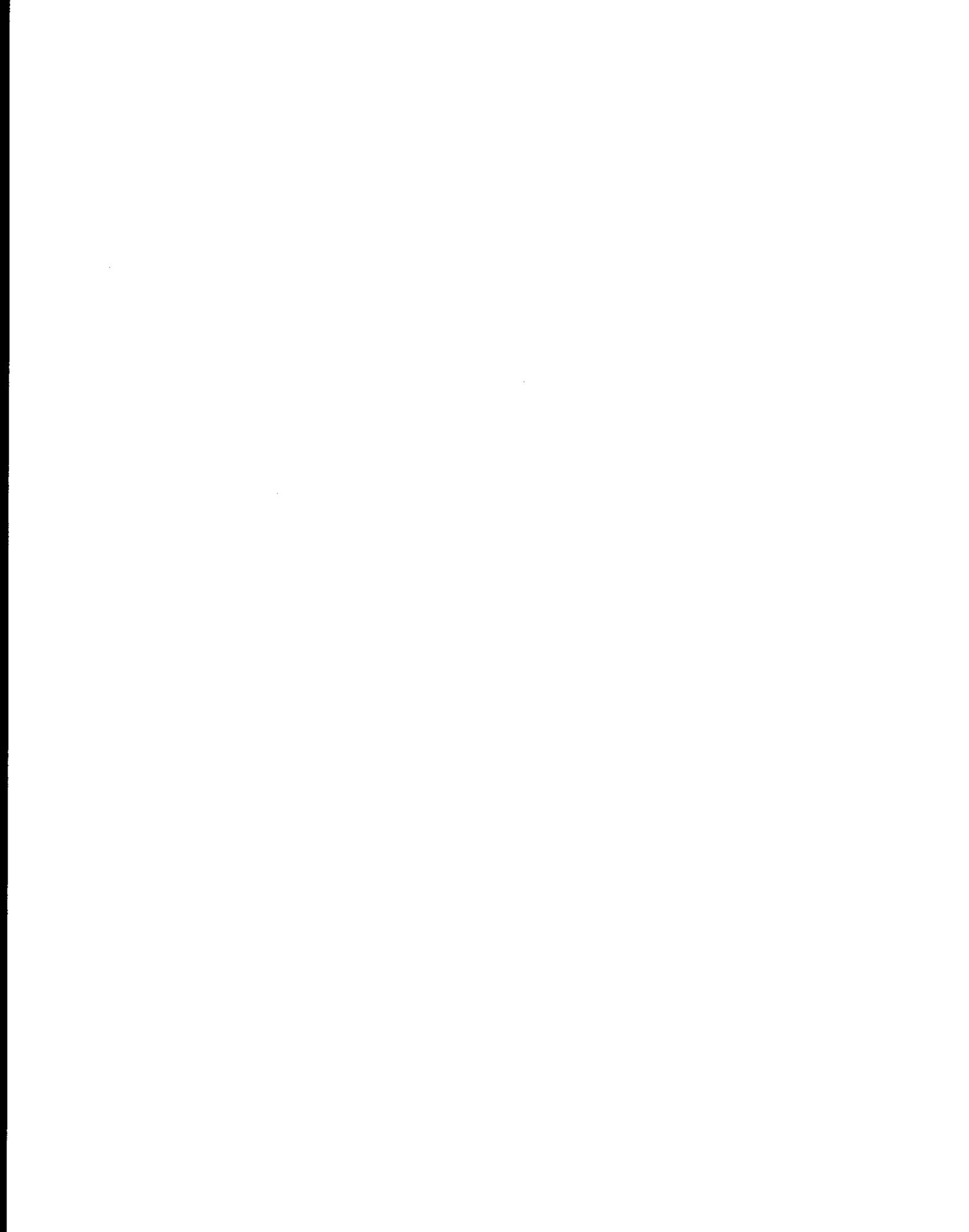
**I also design web sites, am a business management consultant and a FAA Certified Ground Instructor for Private Pilots. I've taken a hit in all areas for income. I don't do budget billing because I make less money in the summer. I don't qualify for Low Income Energy Assistance, nor do I want to. However, I'm now drawing on my IRA to supplement my income. I love my home, what I do and I love Helena and the people here, but something has to change.**

**I've been told that Montana has celebrated much lower utility rates than the rest of the country. It's about time we paid our fair share. But here's what else I know. According to the US Census Bureau, our personal income per capita in 2002 ranks Montana as 45 out of 50 states. That's five from the bottom.**

**Our energy consumption per person, for the year 2000, has us listed as the fourth highest user of energy in the country.**

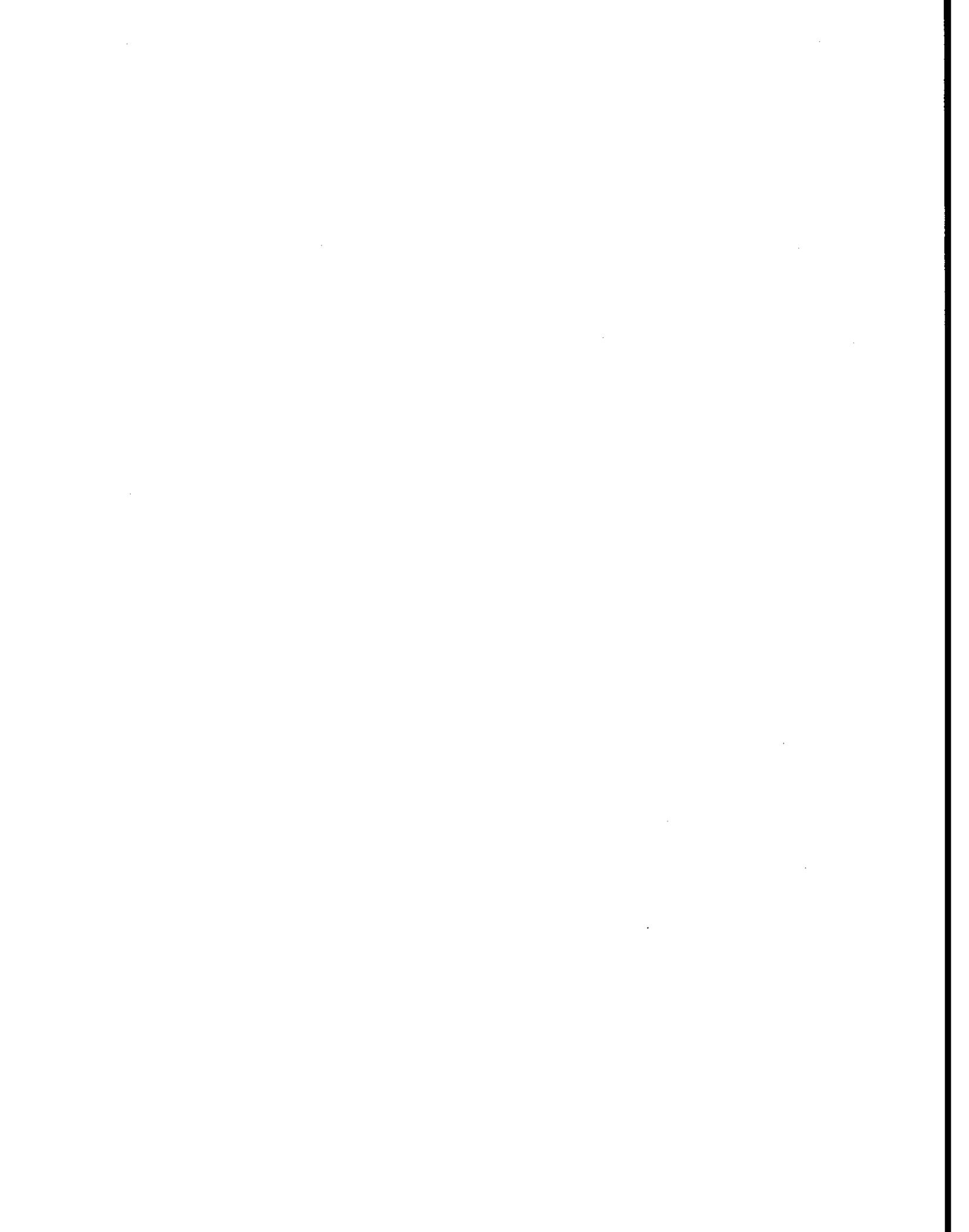
**In 1999, Montana ranked as 23<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for persons below the poverty level.**

**In addition, if you look at the number of suicides nationwide, Montana has ranked among the ten highest states for ten years. In 2000, we were number 4 from the top.**



**It's cold and it's dark in the winter months in Montana, with or without snow. I've tried turning my heat down to 56 degrees and I can't do it. I feel like the little match girl when I turn up the heat, one eye on the money in the bank while I'm warming my backside in front of the heater.**

**I believe to not look at all these factors, is to turn our back on the American way of life and all that we all believe in.**



# AARP



Senate Energy & Telecomm.  
Exhibit No.  
Date 2.3.05  
Bill No. ENFO HRB

## Montana

*wants to keep Montanans  
warm this winter*



*Urgent  
information to  
help make energy  
more affordable...*



## INCOME TAX CREDIT FOR ENERGY SAVING IMPROVEMENTS

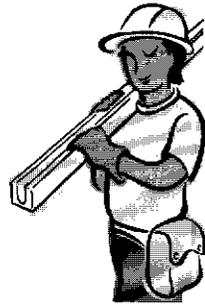


Montana homeowners are eligible for a tax credit for a portion of the costs to install measures that reduce energy usage. The credit is 25% of the investments made to improve energy efficiency, up to a \$500 annual credit.

### What conservation investments qualify?

#### EXISTING HOMES:

- Adding insulation
- Installing energy efficient windows
- Installing Energy Star heating systems
- Installing programmable thermostats
- Insulating and sealing heating system ductwork.



#### NEW HOMES and REMODELING:

The tax credit is allowed for **ONLY** for the portion of cost and materials that is above established standards.

### How to sign up:

Complete and include tax form "ENRG-C" when filing your State Income taxes **ONLY** for the year improvements are made. Tax forms are available at [www.energizemontana.com](http://www.energizemontana.com) or by calling the Department of Revenue at 406-444-6900.



Save up to 30% on annual utility costs with the purchase of Energy Star products and appliances. Check out [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) to take advantage of this money saving strategy.

### ENERGY SHARE OF MONTANA

A private nonprofit organization with the primary purpose of helping Montanans faced with energy emergencies meet their needs. Often, families face some type of financial emergency when an unexpected expense occurs, for example a vehicle breaking down, or medical expenses. **One of the chief ways Energy Share helps people is with their heating bills**, through one time bill assistance.

Another way Energy Share helps is through its **furnace and water heater safety and efficiency programs**. These programs are funded by ENERGY WEST and MDU for their customers who have unsafe furnaces or water heaters. Energy Share will examine the appliance and either repair it if possible, or replace it if necessary.

### How to sign up:

Call the local Human Resource Development Council or the statewide Energy Share office at **1-800-777-7589**.

## FEDERAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)

All Montanans who pay their own energy bill (even if included in rent payments) and earn less than indicated in the chart below per year:

<b>Number in Household</b>	<b>Income</b>
<b>One</b>	<b>\$13,965</b>
<b>Two</b>	<b>\$18,735</b>
<b>Three</b>	<b>\$23,505</b>
<b>Additional Members</b>	<b>\$ 4,770 per person</b>

OR Households with all members receiving SSI or TANF funding can qualify to receive bill assistance for the October- April heating season.

### **How to sign up:**

Call the Governor's Citizen's Advocate Hotline at 1-800-332-2272 or contact your local Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) to find out where to apply. **Sign up begins October 1.**

### **HRDC OFFICE NUMBERS**

<b>BILLINGS</b>	<b>247-4732</b>	<b>1800-433-1411</b>
<b>BOZEMAN</b>	<b>222-0896</b>	<b>1800-332-2796</b>
<b>BUTTE</b>	<b>496-4975</b>	<b>1800-382-1325</b>
<b>GREAT FALLS</b>	<b>761-0310</b>	<b>1800-927-2270</b>
<b>HAVRE</b>	<b>265-6743</b>	<b>1800-640-6743</b>
<b>HELENA</b>	<b>447-1625</b>	<b>1800-356-6544</b>
<b>KALISPELL</b>	<b>758-5433</b>	<b>1800-344-5979</b>
<b>LEWISTOWN</b>	<b>538-7488</b>	<b>1800-766-3018</b>
<b>GLENDIVE</b>	<b>377-3564</b>	<b>1800-227-0703</b>
<b>MISSOULA</b>	<b>728-3710</b>	

### **FREE WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM**

Households that qualify for LIEAP will also be enrolled in the weatherization program. Not all households will be weatherized within the first year on the program.

### **FREE services provided during weatherization:**

Heating system and ducts are tested and any modifications or replacements are made.

Water heaters are wrapped.

Insulation is installed to attics, walls, floors, and pipes.

Interior and exterior storm windows are installed.

Primary door is replaced for more efficiency.

General repairs to property are made to meet safety standards.

### **How to sign up:**

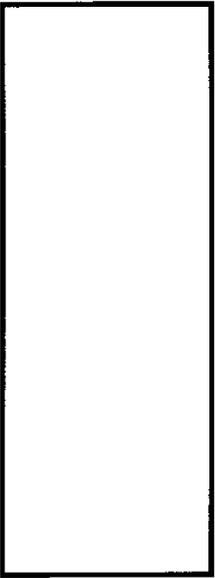
This service is only available for LIEAP qualified customers. To sign up for LIEAP see information above.





# Montana

*AARP Montana*  
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*Winter 2004-05*

## NORTHWESTERN ENERGY FREE HOME ENERGY AUDITS

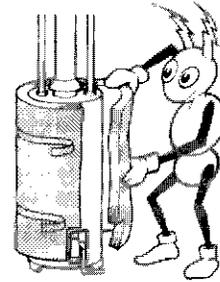
NorthWestern Energy space and water heater customers, who own or rent and have not had an energy audit on their home since 1992, can qualify for a free home energy audit.

### Services provided during visit:

FREE blower door test  
FREE analysis of home energy use and recommendations for savings  
FREE water heater safety check  
FREE insulation and ventilation check

### Materials installed during visit:

FREE water heater blanket  
FREE pipe insulation  
FREE low flow showerheads  
FREE low flow sink aerators



### How to sign up:

Call toll free 1-800-823-5995 to schedule a FREE NorthWestern Energy audit.



## UTILITY DISCOUNTS

### NorthWestern Energy Discount

Customers who are on LIEAP will automatically receive a 15% discount on their NWE electric and natural gas bill.

### Montana Dakota Utility Discount

Customers who are on LIEAP qualify for a 5-25% discount based on income level. Qualifying customers over 65 will also receive an additional 5% discount..

### Flathead Electric Co-op Bill Assistance

Customers who earn 150% of poverty or below are eligible for a 50% discount on their basic service fee. Or any customer facing disconnection can qualify for one time bill assistance up to \$200. Contact Flathead Electric to apply for these two programs.

### Energy West

Customers on LIEAP qualify for up to a 10% discount on their gas bill. Or any customer with approved credit can qualify for up to \$1500 on an interest free loan or up to \$4000 on a low-interest loan for energy saving improvements. Contact Energy West to find out more.

If your utility is not listed, contact the utility directly or ask your local Human Resource Development Council if assistance is available.

## QUICK ENERGY SAVING TIPS

### **Reduce the amount of warm water used.**

- Turn water heater temperature down to 115-120° F.
- Change to a low-flow shower head that uses less than 3 gallons of water per minute.
- Run only full loads in the dishwasher and clothes washer in warm or cold water.



### **Turning down the heat, turns down the bill.**

Consider turning down the thermostat when going to bed or going away. Programmable thermostats do it automatically and are eligible for the Montana Energy conservation tax credit.

### **Seal all air leaks.**

Take this simple test to measure the air leakage in your home:

During cold weather, is your home drafty, excessively dry, which leads to static electricity shocks?

If so, excessive air leakage could be the cause.

Or is your home moist with condensed water collecting on windows?

If so, your home may be too tightly insulated.

**The best way to check air tightness is to have a blower door test done during a home energy audit.**

Remember to close the fireplace damper when there is no fire.



### **Clean or replace furnace and heat pump filter.**

The efficiency of your furnace is lowered when it does not get enough air.

### **Use compact fluorescent bulb in light fixtures.**

Start first with the lights most used.

### **Check your freezer and refrigerator temperatures.**

Freezer temperatures should be set at 0-5° F and refrigerators at 38-40° F.

THESE ENERGY SAVING TIPS AND MORE CAN BE FOUND IN THE MONTANA ENERGY SAVERS GUIDE BOOK AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [WWW.ENERGIZEMONTANA.COM](http://WWW.ENERGIZEMONTANA.COM) OR CALL 406-444-6697.