

Summer 2009

# The Hartselle



*Serving Hartselle's People, Building for Hartselle's Future*

## Weatherization Assistance Available to Hartselle Customers

Making your house more energy efficient can reduce your energy costs by over \$400 per year. But for many low-income homeowners, taking steps to weatherize their home is not affordable.

For many years, Community Action Partnership of North

Alabama has helped low-income households weatherize their homes to reduce annual energy costs.

Professionally trained crews audit homes with state of the art equipment, identifying outside drafts and inspecting heating and cooling systems for efficiency. Depending on the results of the audit, crews will then install insulation in attics, under floors and, where possible, in walls; seal off air leaks; modify or replace existing heating systems; replace regular light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs); and make minor repairs to ensure residents' safety.

Last year, the Partnership was able to secure funding from the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Health and Human Services to weatherize 63 homes. In April, the Partnership was awarded funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 – referred to as the President's Economic Stimulus Bill – to weatherize an additional 488 houses over the next three years.



Top: The "insulation" in a home during an initial audit. Under the weatherization assistance program (bottom), crews installed an R30 blanket – which should lower the home's energy usage.



The program is available to low-income homeowners in Morgan County, along with those in Lawrence, Marion, Winston, Cullman and Walker counties. To qualify, a family must have an income of twice the poverty level; for a family of four to qualify, for example, the total household income must be \$44,100 or less.

All residents within the six-county area whose income falls below the maximum income level will qualify for the program. Once qualified, houses are served based on a priority level. Preference is given to people over 60, those with disabilities and families with children.

Eligible households must complete an application – available from the Partnership or Hartselle Utilities – and submit it, along with photo ID, proof of income, proof of home ownership, a 12-month

energy usage statement, and a property report card from the County Appraiser's Office showing the year the home was built.

Once a household has been approved for the program, they are placed on a waiting list. Generally, work will begin on the home about two and a half months after the application is approved.

For more information and to request an application, call the Partnership at (256) 355-7843, email [rford@capna.org](mailto:rford@capna.org), or call Customer Service at Hartselle Utilities at 773-3340.

## Recent Storms Highlight Importance of Being Prepared for Emergencies



Violent thunderstorms, such as the one that hit Hartselle in June and toppled this tree on Corsbie Street, can cause unexpected power outages. Make sure your family is prepared.

Manager Ferrell Vest with its intensity.

"We lost a lot of really old trees," Vest explains. "Power lines don't stand a chance when large trees start coming down."

About 7:30 p.m. on Monday, June 15, a storm with 70-mph winds blew through Hartselle, knocking down trees, snapping utility poles and disrupting power to about 1,800 residents. The storm, which lasted less than an hour, surprised Hartselle Utilities General

"Some of our staff were still in the office following the Hartselle Utilities Board Meeting," says Customer Service Manager Terri Harris. "Others came back in about 8 p.m., and we answered the phones until after 1 a.m."

Power was back on for about 85 percent of the affected customers by 8:30 the next morning, and HU crews – assisted by crews from Decatur Utilities – restored power to the remaining customers by Thursday afternoon. Although HU always strives to restore power as quickly as possible, Vest says, there can never be a guarantee of immediate service restoration. The storm highlights the need for individuals to be prepared for emergencies and the potential loss of

*Continued on back*

### TVA Fuel Cost Adjustment for July: -4%

The FCA affects only the electric portion of your HU bill. It is adjusted quarterly and can be a credit or debit to allow TVA to recover, when necessary, increases in purchased power and fuel-related costs. The FCA for April was -7%.

## Preparing for Emergencies ... continued from front

power, says Vest.

“Especially if a member of your household has special medical needs, you need to prepare for being without power for an extended length of time,” he explained. “If back-up generators, manually-operated oxygen tanks or other options for running medically necessary equipment are not available, customers should plan ahead for moving a person with medical needs to a different location.”

Although extended power outages in Hartselle are rare, Harris recommends that customers stay prepared, year-round, using this checklist:

- ❑ **Emergency Kit:** Should contain a battery-powered radio, flashlight, batteries for both, candles, matches, first aid supplies and a can opener.
- ❑ **Food and water:** Canned or other non-perishable food, and at least two quarts of drinking water per person per day.
- ❑ **Baby supplies:** If you have an infant, keep a supply of baby food, formula and disposable diapers.
- ❑ **Staying cool:** Keep draperies closed on the sunny side of the house during the day; open windows at night or on mild days for ventilation. Drink small amounts of water and fruit juices often. Keep strenuous activity to a minimum, and take frequent baths with tepid water to lower body temperature.

❑ **Fire prevention:** Keep a UL-listed fire extinguisher, labeled for class A, B and C fires, that is approved for use on ordinary combustibles, flammable liquids and electrical fires. Be sure all adults and older children in the household know how to use it.

If a power outage occurs, Harris says, customers should call HU at 773-3340, or the after hours Emergency Lines at 773-2588 or 773-2533. Other steps to take during a power outage include: stay away from downed power lines; unplug computers and other sensitive appliances to protect them from power surges when electricity is restored; check on elderly or medically dependent neighbors; and remember that HU crews are working as fast as possible – often through the night with little or no sleep – to restore your power.

## Longhorn Pass Extension / New Bridge Update

Construction of the Longhorn Pass Extension and the new CSX Bridge to replace the Hammitt Street Bridge is well underway, reports Jeff Johnson, director of the Department of Development for the City of Hartselle. The bridge foundations are being poured in anticipation of the concrete girder span deliveries.

The roadway clearing has been completed and the roadway dirt base material has been installed from Sparkman Street to Georgia Street, and crews are beginning to put the roadway gravel in place. The new concrete curb and gutter will be installed next. Crews have had to do some reconstruction on the dirt base and have experienced other delays due to weather, which was expected.

“We at the city anticipated a late summer / early fall opening, and that still seems to be on track,” says Johnson. As yet, the new roadway section has not been named.



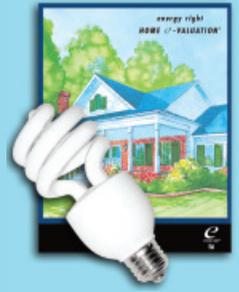
Longhorn Pass Extension roadway construction near Railroad St.



### Earth Day at Earth Park

In April, HU staff joined the annual Earth Day Celebration at Earth Park. Sixth graders from Mrs. Debbie Smith's Science Class at Hartselle Junior High learned how everyday activities can impact our environment. HU Wastewater Treatment Plant Chief Operator Glenn Byrum explained the biological treatment processes at HU's wastewater treatment plant. He showed the students what wastewater looks like before, during and after the treatment process.

## Free Home Energy Audits Available



For tips on ways to save money on energy, HU customers are encouraged to complete a free *energy right* Home E-Valuation audit. This survey can be completed online at [www.energyright.com](http://www.energyright.com), or customers can call HU at 773-3340 and a paper copy of the audit will be mailed to you.

Residents who complete the survey will receive a detailed report with suggestions on ways to save energy and money, along with a free energy efficiency kit, which includes compact fluorescent light bulbs, gasket seals for outlets, water-saving faucet aerators, and a filter whistle that whistles when it is time to change the heating and air system filter.

## Top 10 No Cost Steps to Lower Your Energy Bills This Summer

1. Turn up your cooling system's thermostat to 75-78°F. Don't pay to keep your furniture cool – raise it even more when no one is home.
2. Perform a do-it-yourself energy audit. You can request a print version or perform you audit on-line at [www.energyright.com](http://www.energyright.com).
3. Have your water heater temperature lowered to 120°F and reduce hot water use by taking shorter showers and using cold water for laundry whenever possible.
4. Turn off lights, televisions and other appliances when not in use. Use the “sleep mode” on computers.
5. Remove and recycle your second refrigerator.
6. Keep curtains closed on the south, east and west sides of the house during the day to help keep cool.
7. Clean refrigerator coils. Set the temperature to 36° to 39°F and the freezer to 0° to 5°F.
8. Use the microwave; it cooks faster and doesn't create as much heat as a stove burner.
9. Air-dry dishes instead of using the dishwasher's heat drying option.
10. Run your dishwasher and clothes washer only when full.



The Hartselle Connections is published quarterly by Hartselle Utilities.

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