



## NEWS RELEASE

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# THE GAS COMPANY OFFERS HELP WITH POST-HOLIDAY UTILITY BILLS

## Customers Urged to Enroll in Assistance, Energy-efficiency Programs

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 6, 2010 – As post-holiday bills arrive in mailboxes this month, some families will be faced with tough financial decisions, struggling to make payments in a difficult economy. [Southern California Gas Co.](http://www.socalgas.com) (The Gas Company) urges customers to take advantage of the [utility's assistance programs](#) -- programs that can help reduce winter heating bills and increase energy efficiency.

"We are trying to help our customers in need, including those who are unemployed and those having difficulty paying their bills," said Hal D. Snyder, vice president of customer solutions for The Gas Company.

Customers are encouraged to call The Gas Company before their account is overdue and learn about the available assistance programs. A Gas Company representative will work with customers to set up a payment plan that meets their needs.

The Gas Company offers a wide range of assistance programs for qualifying customers on a limited income or with special medical needs.

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- The **California Alternate Rate for Energy (CARE)** program provides a 20-percent rate discount on the monthly natural gas bill. Customers may be eligible automatically if they currently receive benefits from the Women, Infants and Children, Healthy Families, Medi-Cal/Medicaid, Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or LIHEAP programs.
- **The Direct Assistance Program (DAP)** provides energy-saving home improvements to income-qualified renters and homeowners. Free services include: door weather-stripping and caulking to keep out drafts; ceiling insulation to keep the home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter; low-flow showerheads that can save energy used to heat water; furnace replacement (owner-occupied homes only) and other minor home repairs.
- People who require additional heating for health reasons may qualify for additional natural gas service at the lowest rate through the **Medical Baseline Allowance** program. There are no income requirements for the Medical Baseline program; however, doctor certification is required.
- **The Gas Assistance Fund** provides a one-time grant to customers during the winter who are income-qualified and unable to pay their bill. The program, which is available until funds are depleted, is administered by the United Way of Greater Los Angeles and is funded by donations from customers and employees of The Gas Company, as well as shareholders of Sempra Energy, The Gas Company's parent company.

For all customers, The Gas Company also offers hundreds of dollars in rebates for the purchase of energy-efficient appliances and can provide customers with a free energy- and water-saving kit. The kit includes three faucet aerators and a low-flow showerhead to help customers save energy and water. These devices allow air to enter into the water stream, maintaining a high-pressure flow while reducing water usage – ultimately saving money.

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Customers can enroll in the assistance programs or request payment arrangements by visiting The Gas Company's Web site, [www.socalgas.com/extrahelp](http://www.socalgas.com/extrahelp), or calling The Gas Company toll-free at (800) 427-2200 or (800) 342-4545 in Spanish. To learn how to conserve energy at home, customers can visit [www.socalgas.com/energyefficiency](http://www.socalgas.com/energyefficiency).

Southern California Gas Co. is the nation's largest natural gas distribution utility, providing safe and reliable energy to 20.5 million consumers through 5.7 million meters in more than 500 communities. Southern California Gas Company ranked "Highest in Customer Satisfaction with Residential Natural Gas Service in the Western United States," according to the 2009 study by J.D. Power and Associates\*. The company's service territory encompasses approximately 20,000 square miles in diverse terrain throughout Central and Southern California, from Visalia to the Mexican border. The Gas Company is a regulated subsidiary of [Sempra Energy](http://www.sempraenergy.com) (NYSE: SRE). Sempra Energy, based in San Diego, is a Fortune 500 energy services holding company. To learn more, go to [www.socalgas.com](http://www.socalgas.com).

*\*About the J.D. Power and Associates study: Southern California Gas Company received the highest numerical score among gas utilities in the Western U.S. in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2009 Gas Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study<sup>SM</sup>. Study based on 54,405 total interviews with U.S. residential gas customers measuring 15 utilities in the West (AZ, CA, ID, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY). Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of consumers surveyed in September 2008-July 2009. Your experiences may vary.*

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