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State offers heating-bill support

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BY MARY WISNIEWSKI Business Reporter

With heating bills expected to rise by up to 70 percent this winter, the state has launched a public information campaign to help Illinois residents prepare.

Through the "Keep Warm Illinois" campaign, state agencies are expanding public education, energy conservation and assistance efforts to help families get help this winter, according to Ed Hurley, special director of Emergency Energy Assistance.

"Every Illinois household will be affected by record heating costs, especially senior citizens and families already struggling to make ends meet," Hurley said.

The initiative includes a Web site -- www.keepwarm.illinois.gov -- that offers energy saving tips and links to energy assistance programs.

The tips include information on applying for grants from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program or LIHEAP, which is open to all eligible, low-income households starting today. The LIHEAP information line is (800) 252-8643.

Starting today, Illinois will lower thermostats in its own public buildings to 68 degrees -- which could save close to \$4 million through April 1.

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