

News Release

For More Information, Contact:

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April 12, 2019

For Immediate Release

Mass Save Great Appliance Exchange, Take Two

Montague, MA—April 11, 2010—I'm hoping that you didn't read the information I provided last week about the Massachusetts appliance rebates. Most of last week's information was based on an e-mail I received about the rebate program, and some of the information was not very helpful or even wrong (the phone number listed). My apologies for not fact checking.

So, here's what I now know about the so-called "Mass Save Great Appliance Exchange." From April 22nd (Earth Day) through May 5th, or while rebate funds last, you can reserve rebates for eligible appliances online or by phone. The phone number will be posted online starting April 22nd at 10 am, a potential catch 22 for those of you not online. If you aren't able to go online to get that number, you can try calling the DOER at the phone number listed at end of this article, for the reservation phone number.

I found the online information about this program a bit hard to track down, so I'd like to share a tip. Go to MassSave's website for homes: <http://www.masssave.com/residential>. Do NOT click on the "Lighting & Appliances" "Find Incentives" icon where you'd think it would be. DO look to the right side of the residential page for the green and brown icon that says, "The Great Appliance Exchange" and click there. That's where you'll find more information about the program, including rebate amounts for each appliance type, downloadable lists of eligible appliances, and participating retailers in our area.

According to the website, "Each Massachusetts household is eligible for one rebate per product category (for a total of up to four rebates)." The four appliance categories are dishwashers (\$250 rebate), refrigerators (\$200), freezers (\$50 rebate) and clothes washers (\$175 rebate). I believe that you can use the rebates only to replace working appliances and that the old appliance(s) must be hauled away when the new one(s) is/are delivered.

To reserve your rebate for each appliance type that you want to purchase, you simply need to make your reservation online or by phone. You don't need to choose which specific model you're buying ahead of time, though you do have to buy your appliance(s) between April 22nd and May 5th, so it might be worthwhile shopping ahead. Rebates are given out on a first come, first served basis, so you'd be most likely to be able to take advantage of these incentives if you make your reservations soon after the program begins April 22nd.

When you go to stores that are participating in this program, look for appliances with the Mass Save Great Appliance Exchange logo. The two stores that I visited had very limited options of the eligible fridges I'm interested in, but, when I asked one store if I could order others on the list of eligible fridges, they did find more. It's worth asking, if you don't find what you're looking for on display at the stores you visit.

Just to confuse matters a bit more, "There is an *additional* \$50 ENERGY STAR refrigerator/freezer mail-in rebate, only available to Massachusetts electric customers of the following utilities and energy efficiency service providers: Cape Light Compact, National Grid, NSTAR, Unitil, and Western Massachusetts Electric Company," according to the website. I picked up the rebate form for this offer at Central Appliance on Main Street in Greenfield and am guessing that other retailers have the forms.

Before you go through this somewhat cumbersome process, you may want to check your appliances to see if they're equally efficient as what's being offered. I have a Kill A Watt meter, which measures the energy use of whatever it's plugged into. The Greenfield Solar Store sells them, and there are two available for borrowing at the Leverett library. I plugged it into my fridge for 12 hours and got a reading that worked out over a year to be well above the yearly kilowatt-hours of the more efficient fridges in the rebate. But, now that I've had the meter plugged in for several days, I'm seeing that my fridge runs only about 50 kWh more a year than the fridges I'm considering. So, in the end, I may not get a new fridge, saving myself time and money.

If you have more questions about the Mass Save Great Appliance Exchange program that aren't answered on the website, you can call the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) at 617-626-7350 (and for the record, that phone number is correct ; >).

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July 19, 2010

For Immediate Release

PACE-Enabling Legislation Passes in MA, Allowing Towns to Give Green Energy Loans

Montague, MA—July 20, 2010—The Massachusetts legislature has passed Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) legislation that enables towns to set up a fund that would allow homeowners and businesses to finance energy efficiency measures and clean energy technologies at low interest rates, rather than having to pay for

them up front. Since upfront costs are one of the most significant barriers to implementing deeper energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy measures, this has the potential to jumpstart these green efforts.

Massachusetts joins approximately 25 other states in passing this enabling legislation. Towns will be able to set up such a fund, using bonds or other funding sources, and provide low interest loans secured through a lien on the home or business, much like a water or sewer connection lien. The energy savings would likely be equal to or higher than the cost of the annual loan payments, paid as property taxes, since payment would be stretched out over a long period. If a home or building is sold before the loan is paid back, the loan is passed on to the future owner.

Several hurdles must, however, be overcome, before such loans are made available. A town must approve a bond or establish another funding source for the loans, and it must develop a system to administer the loans. Lastly, the federal government is working to iron out a conflict with Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Federal Housing Finance Agency, the country's largest lenders, who are fighting PACE loans because a PACE loan is to be paid back before mortgages, in the case of a foreclosure or sale.

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Sally Pick, 413-367-0082, SJP@crocker.com, Montague Energy Committee member
Montague, MA – September 24, 2010

Saturday, October 2: Visit Montague's Green Homes

Montague, MA – September 24, 2010 –On Saturday, October 2nd, Montague homeowners will open their doors as part of the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association's (NESEA) Green Buildings Open House event, and Montague will be one of roughly 6,000 communities participating in the American Solar Energy Society's National Solar Tour. The national tour has expanded this year into all 50 states and Mexico and the Virgin Islands.

Tours are self-guided, and maps, descriptions, and open hours of the host sites are on NESEA's Green Buildings Open House webpages at <http://www.nesea.org/greenbuildings>. At least five homes will be featured in the Town of Montague, including several in Turners Falls and several others in Montague Center.

We encourage you to bike to area green open houses or park in a neighborhood and walk around to see the green buildings. The Montague Energy Committee is promoting Montague's participation.

Here is a taste of what you can see on the tour:

Start anywhere (best to confirm hours and get directions, if needed, online at the NESEA website)

Turners Falls:

- Jack Nelson & Eileen Dowd, 26 J St., Open hours: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

This three-story brick building was built to house factory and paper mill workers in late 1800s and overlooks the canal. It is now a work and studio space on the first two floors and with the top floor as a living space. It is heated and cooled with a geothermal system.

- Tina Clarke, 14 Marstons Alley (off Greenfield Rd.), Open hours: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Winner of the MA Zero Energy Challenge competition, this new home is a "Power House," with excess energy production. Its total annual energy use from August '09 to July '10 was 1,859 kwh; during that time, it produced 4,871 kwh of electricity. It generates 2.5 times the energy needed to provide heat, ventilation, air conditioning, electricity & hot water. It is Platinum LEED certified, has affordable construction, a metal roof, double-stud walls, passive solar heat, super-efficient windows, healthy house/low-toxic construction, recycled building materials, and more.

Montague Center:

- Alice & Ted Armen, 68 Main St., Open hours: 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

This home showcases solar domestic hot water, grid tied photovoltaics ["PV," also called solar electric panels], passive solar, Energy Star appliances and weatherization. Renovations were done in a way appropriate to a house listed in the Registry of Historic Places.

- Jill Bromberg, 44 Main Street. Open hours: 10 a.m. – noon. This 1840s post and beam cape features grid tied photovoltaics ["PV," also called solar electric panels].

- Sally Pick, 25 Union St., Open hours: 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

This home, built in 1856, has been retrofitted with energy saving features such as attic cellulose insulation to R-60, sealing of air leaks, and landscaping for summer shading and to direct water from the basement (which reduces the need for energy-intensive dehumidifying). Green building materials include FSC-certified birch flooring grown and harvested sustainably by the Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative and treated with low-VOC, water-based floor finish. The home minimizes water use with low-flow fixtures, a dual flush toilet, and a rain barrel for collecting roof runoff, to water outdoor plants. Solar hot water was added in 2008.

For more details about these and other green buildings on the October 2nd tour, take a look at the NESEA website <http://www.nesea.org/greenbuildings>.

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October 5, 2010

For Immediate Release

60+ Qualify for Free MassSave Energy Improvements--Sign Up by October 15th

Montague, MA—October 8, 2010—If you're 60 or over, lucky you! Regardless of your income, you qualify for matching funds to cover the out-of-pocket cost of MassSave energy updates. MassSave will cover 75% of the cost of insulating your home, up to \$2,000; Franklin County Home Care (FCHCC) has funds to cover the 25% out-of-pocket that you would pay, up to \$600. So, if you take advantage of this offer, you can do up to \$2,600 in energy saving upgrades at zero cost to you. And you get energy savings over time to boot!

How do you sign up? Call MassSave ASAP to schedule an energy audit **before or soon after the October 15th deadline (as soon as an audit appointment is available)**: 1-866-527-7283. Then hang up and call FCHCC at 1-413-773-5555 to let them know you want to participate in this limited time offer. If you're getting close to the deadline, FCHCC can probably be somewhat flexible, as long as you call them by around October 15th.

FCHCC may also connect you with a Home Energy Benefits Counselor to help guide you through the process.

If you want more information on the MassSave program, you can check it out online at

<http://www.MassSave.com/residential/>.

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For Recorder's Going Green

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October 8, 2010

Montague Energy Committee Leads Path to Green Community Designation

Maybe you've heard that Montague has an Energy Committee, but you're not sure what it is they do.

This last winter and spring, the energy committee collaborated closely with members of town staff to enter a race to be one of the first Massachusetts municipalities to qualify as a Green Community. Becoming a Green Community would mean that the town could apply for a state grant for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. And by meeting the first Green Communities deadline in May, they would compete with only those communities who also made the first deadline, for the pot of roughly \$8 million.

Montague already met some of the criteria required of Green Communities, but several criteria would demand a focused effort. Under the skillful and knowledgeable leadership of its chair, Chris Mason (who is also Northampton's energy officer), the committee closely examined whether passing the so-called Stretch Code, which would require that buildings built in town would have to meet more stringent energy codes, was the right path for Montague. With input from contractors, a real estate association leader, a local lender, and the town's building inspector, David Jensen, they raised questions, explored answers, and decided that the Stretch Code would be a positive addition to the town's energy efforts. Committee members, Chris Mason and Sally Pick spoke at town meeting of the committee's support for passing the Stretch Code, and, with vocal backing from Jensen and others, town meeting members approved it.

The final big push came at the end, when new town planner, Walter Ramsey, focused on compiling an energy baseline, to identify Montague's energy use and, from there, propose ways to cut that energy use by at least 20% within 5 years, as required of Green Communities. Tracking down each department's energy consumption was no small feat, but Ramsey worked overtime and made it happen. With help from the committee, he prepared and submitted the proposal just under the wire.

Montague qualified as one of the first Green Communities and, in early summer, was awarded just under \$155,000 in grant money by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER gave out grants based on the size of a municipality). On September 24th, Ian Bowles, Secretary of the MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, honored Montague and three other towns in the area for committing in their Green Communities plans to increased energy efficiency. The town will use the money to buy down the cost of the energy service performance contract it is entering into with Siemens Building Technologies for energy saving

projects such as installing a new, high efficiency boiler in town hall, weatherizing town libraries, and installing efficient lighting and lighting controls in many town buildings.

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November 2, 2010

For Immediate Release

Montague Energy Committee Sets New Goals

Montague, MA— November 2, 2010—At its inception in the fall of 2008, the Montague Energy Committee hit the ground running. You may remember that that was the year that energy prices skyrocketed. The committee set its sights on educating residents about ways that they could save energy, and in doing so, avoid a huge increase in their energy bills. Participants attended workshops on energy efficiency techniques and programs at the senior center in Turners Falls, at the Montague Center library, at the Brick House in Turners, in Lake Pleasant, and at the Maezumi Institute in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Montague. They also attended an open house at the Zero Energy prize-winning home in Montague City.

Next the committee focused on qualifying as a Green Community, to make the town eligible for new state grant monies for energy efficiency projects. The committee committed to becoming one of the first Green Communities in order to be in a better position to obtain the first of the grants. With a great deal of collaboration with town planner, Walter Ramsey, they met all five criteria required for qualification as a Green Community in time for the first grant deadline. Last summer, Montague secured a Green Community grant for just under \$155,000; the funds will be put toward the cost of a energy performance contract with Siemens that will lower the town's energy use and electric and heat costs.

Taking time out of its action-oriented process to define clear goals for the committee for the coming years, members met on Friday, October 29, for a three-hour retreat. An initial discussion of what motivates people to participate on the committee brought out some common themes: focusing on bringing energy efficiency to residents as well as municipal buildings, leading with vision and establishing energy efficiency as a norm in Montague, finding ways to actively motivate committee members and the community to make such changes, increasing the use of renewable energy and working to support its financing, looking for ways to measure the impact of its programs on energy use, and ensuring that the committee's efforts are sustainable for its members.

The committee brainstormed short and long-term visions of Montague related to energy. Some potential five year visions include: establishing a zero or low interest loan program to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy for residents; getting 25% of the homes/apartments in Montague retrofitted for energy efficiency; procuring fine bubble aeration to make the town's largest energy user, the waste water treatment plant, more efficient; supporting increases in energy efficiency with local work parties, sponsoring events, posting lawn signs that increase the visibility of efficiency efforts, and using a logo; locating green industry in Montague; collaborating and planning energy programs with local organizations, faith-based entities, and neighborhood groups; seeking area college/university energy program involvement; and supporting a green building and operations for the Department of Public Works.

Long-term visions discussed include: 75% of Montague homes/apartments retrofitted for energy efficiency in ten years; developing hydro-power opportunities at the Montague Mill, the Connecticut River canal, and the waste water treatment plant; developing local food systems such as more Turners Falls community gardens; and running town vehicles on biodiesel. With the example in mind of a formerly impoverished town that installed wind power and now finds itself to be wealthy and green, one member suggested an overall long-term vision of a green and economically thriving Montague.

For the coming year, the committee plans to help the greater community and the town reduce their energy use by working with other organizations and groups in the town and achieving measurable results. In the coming months, the energy committee will take a closer look at its visions and refine them into next steps and clear short and long-term goals. If you would like to participate in this planning process or on the committee, the committee invites you to come to its meetings, currently the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month from 5 pm to 7 pm at the Town Hall in Turners Falls.

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