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It is our mission to put names and faces to the people who work on energy efficiency in the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors and renewable projects, including solar, wind and water, biomass, geothermal, and hydrogen and fuel cells, supported by the Department of Energy and beyond.

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By pushing the limits of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies and supporting some of America’s most innovative businesses, we are saving American jobs and continuing to build a clean-energy economy that will improve the lives and reward the ingenuity of the American people.

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Legendary W.Va. senior citizen stays warm, saves money after receiving new furnace

Beulah Sisk has been an icon in the Princeton, W.Va., community for decades | Photo courtesy CASEWV

For the last 56 years, Beulah Sisk has lived in the same house in Princeton, W.Va. Beulah, who worked for 25 years at Lloyd’s Pastry Shop, is well known in Princeton. People still see her on the streets today and recognize her as an icon in the community.

After a wind storm damaged Beulah’s home last year, it came as no surprise when a senior center employee, concerned for Beulah’s safety, told her about the weatherization assistance program.

“A tree fell on my house and damaged a lot of things, including my furnace,” Beulah says. “I tried to have it repaired, but it still wasn’t working exactly right for the house and the weatherization people put a new furnace in.”

After being approved for the program run by Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia, Beulah received not only a new furnace, but also a new hot water heater and insulation in her home, along with new smoke detectors. As a senior living on a fixed income, she said the program was a blessing for her, and she enjoys being able to invite friends and family over to visit now that her living conditions are in good order.

“I was paying around $100 each month on my gas heating bill. But I got a letter for this month that says I don’t need to pay anything — it looks like I still had a credit with them because I’ve used less,” Beulah says. “My bills are down and the house is a lot warmer.”

West Virginian no longer worried about family’s safety

When the mountain winters hit for the last 12 years, Michael Shepard and his family had only a wood stove in their house for heat, plus a few kerosene heaters when the stove didn’t do the trick.

Michael’s diagnosis as a diabetic, coupled with a shoulder injury, left him disabled, resulting in his early retirement. Relying on a wood stove with a serious shoulder injury meant getting heat in Michael’s Bluefield, W.Va., home was a struggle.

“It was cold, just using wood heat, and my wife had to carry it in for me,” he says.

After applying for and receiving weatherization assistance from Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia last year, though, his lifestyle at home has changed. The agency updated old electrical wiring in Michael’s home, installed a new hot water tank, weather strips, insulation in previously uninsulated walls and the attic, and, perhaps most importantly, an electric furnace.

Michael worried before about keeping his family safe and warm during freezing temperatures. Now, his 12-year-old daughter is comfortable when doing her homework, and Michael doesn’t have to wake up three times in the middle of the night to try to keep a fire going.

“The comfort level is great, and comparing my electric bill with what I would’ve spent on wood, I’m saving money,” he says. “If anyone hasn’t had their home weatherized yet, they should’ve done it a long time ago.”

W.V. mom sees benefits of weatherization

Not only is Rachael McCarty working full-time and going to college, but also she’s a full-time single mom of two small children. After moving to Bluefield, W.Va., from California a few years ago, Rachel bought her first home, a property that needed some work.

“It’s a very, very old house, and it didn’t really have any insulation,” she says.

Last year, Rachael was approved for the weatherization assistance program from Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia. The agency installed a new furnace and insulation, along with a new hot water heater and weather stripping for the doors. She says the house was much easier to heat this past winter because of those improvements.

“Life is now very good,” Rachael says. “My children are in a nice, warm home, thanks to all the work that CASEWV weatherization did.”

At age 22, Rachael now has her future ahead of her with a safe home in which she can raise her children. Her house also stands out in Bluefield from the rest. The inspiring young woman has painted her house yellow, with purple trim, and it’s also a more energy-efficient home now than those that haven’t been weatherized.

“It probably cut my energy bills in half,” she says.

Rachael was impressed with the weatherization program and the professionalism of the workers who made the improvements at her home.

“I wouldn’t have been able to afford to do the work myself, so I think it’s a wonderful program,” she says.

Rachael McCarty didn’t have the upfront money to weatherize her home, but CASEWV did it for her, and now she’s saving money on her energy bills.

For Beulah’s safety, told her about the weatherization program run by Co Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia last year, though, his lifestyle at home has changed. The agency updated old electrical wiring in Michael’s home, installed a new hot water tank, weather strips, insulation in previously uninsulated walls and the attic, and, perhaps most importantly, an electric furnace.

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Michael Shepard was paying a lot of money for firewood to heat his home until CASEWV sent a weatherization team that installed an electric furnace and insulated the Bluefield, W.Va., house. | Photo courtesy CASEWV