

## New Mexico Weatherization Day

### October 21, 2014

After several years of hosting large-scale Weatherization Day celebrations, MFA decided to take a more targeted approach for New Mexico's 2014 Weatherization Day. The goal was to use the event to help MFA regain state funding for its NM EnergySmart program that was lost in 2009 when the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act legislation was passed. After ARRA weatherization funds were expended in 2011, the state never resumed its annual allocation of \$500 to \$800 thousand dollars for the program. The loss has greatly impacted MFA's ability to provide weatherization services throughout New Mexico.

Sen. John Arthur Smith is the chairman of New Mexico's Legislative Finance Committee and plays a key role in determining what programs and organizations will receive state allocations each year. The MFA weatherization staff had two meetings with Sen. Smith during the past few months to educate him about the NM EnergySmart program and to stress the need to resume funding. Our thought was that, if Sen. Smith could see first-hand the benefits of weatherization, it would help him see how profoundly and personally the program impacts New Mexicans and how important weatherization is to their health and well being.

We selected two homes in Deming, New Mexico to tour with Sen. Smith and a small group of carefully selected guests. In addition to being Sen. Smith's hometown, Deming is close to the offices of a co-op we are hoping to partner with in the near future. Combined with the fact that we have never held a Weatherization Day in the southwest region of New Mexico, Deming was the perfect location for this year's event.

The first home the Weatherization Day group toured was weatherized last year, and the second home was being weatherized during the walk through, allowing guests to observe the process. Residents of both homes were excited about and thankful for the work they received, and they did an outstanding job of selling the program with no prompting from MFA staff. The families had compelling stories and were greatly in need of weatherization services. The fact sheet we distributed during the tour detailed their stories and the work that was done in their homes. (Please see attached fact sheet.)

Representatives from the Public Service Company of New Mexico, an important leveraging source, and the board and staff of the local agency that provides weatherization services in that area were invited and participate in the Weatherization Day tour. In addition, a representative from Congressman Tom Udall's office and a staff member from the southern New Mexico HUD offices were also in attendance.

The small group and relaxed atmosphere allowed MFA staff to have important one-on-one conversations with these key people – specifically Sen. Smith. And the comments from the residents, along with the opportunity to see exactly how the homes had been improved, seemed to make a significant impact on all of the guests. We are hopeful that our targeted, thoughtful approach to this year's Weatherization Day will result in restored funding for MFA's NM EnergySmart weatherization program.