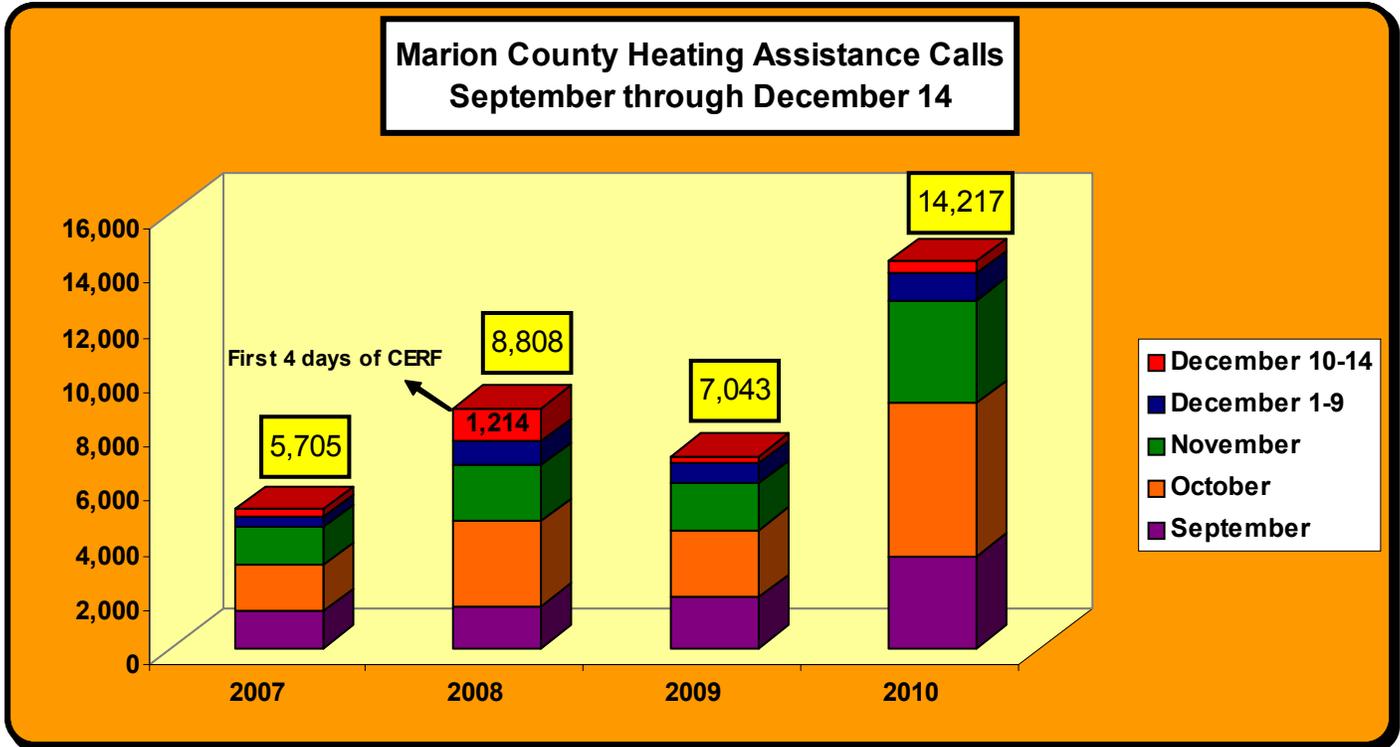


## Calls for Heating Help on the Rise as Energy Assistance Funds Dwindle



### **Bitter cold temperatures herald the heating season**

Calls from Marion County residents needing heating assistance are up **102% in 2010** compared to 2009. Adding to the angst caused by the early bitter cold winter weather is the fact that the community **Energy Assistance Program**, operated through CAGI, **will have no more funds to distribute to those in need after December 17, 2010**. The program normally runs through March. Residents needing heating help will be put on a waiting list, in the hope that they will be served if additional funding is secured.

### **Are we really in a recovery?**

The height of the most recent recession was during 2008. The financial meltdown left many without the means to pay for basic needs such as housing and utilities. In the final days of that year, a group of central Indiana funders created the **Community Economic Relief Fund**. An announcement was made on December 10, 2010, urging those in need to call 2-1-1 for help with housing and utilities. In just the first 4 days following that announcement, Connect2Help answered 1,214 calls for utility help, a staggering 323% increase compared to the same time period in 2009.

Two years later, in the **2010 heating season, utility calls are up 62% over 2008**. Unemployment in Marion County hovers near the double-digit mark (compared to 7.2% in December of 2008). The financial "recovery" announced earlier in the year seems doubtful to many.

Connect2Help will continue to monitor the community resources that are available to help those in need. Information changes quickly. **To find help or to give help, call 2-1-1 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**