

# Mount Desert Islander

## Warming centers open next week

*Written by Mark Good*



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**SOUTHWEST HARBOR** — Beginning Monday, the MDI Community Campfire Coalition is making available daytime warming centers at three locations on Mount Desert Island.

The centers, which are open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday, are at Ridge Apartments in Southwest Harbor, Maple Lane Apartments in Northeast Harbor and Malvern Belmont Estates in Bar Harbor. The MDI Housing Authority owns and manages all three facilities.

The MDI Community Campfire Coalition is opening the centers as part of its mission to provide aid to Mount Desert Island residents who are facing high heating bills this winter. The coalition is made up of 20 community service agencies, town officials and churches. Three organizations – Harbor House Community Service Center in Southwest Harbor, Neighborhood House in Mount Desert and the Maine Seacoast Mission in Bar Harbor – serve as the contact agencies for clients.

The warming shelters are open to all. There is no charge for the service.

Hot lunches will be served at no cost to people age 60 and older, and for \$7 to others. In addition to providing food and a warm environment, the centers are to offer activities and cable television, said Margy Vose, community relations manager at Harbor House.

Island Connections is providing free transportation to and from the warming centers. To arrange a ride, call 288-4457.

The warming centers are designed to provide residents with a place to stay warm while turning down their thermostats at home during the day, thus saving money on fuel.

The coalition also has announced that a hotline is now available for people seeking help with paying their heating bills. The hotline is maintained by Neighborhood House and can be reached at 276-5039.

Among the services offered is a fuel assistance program. Applications for fuel assistance can be picked up at Harbor House, Neighborhood House, Maine Seacoast Mission, the MDI YMCA in Bar Harbor, the Bar Harbor Food Pantry and the Westside Food Pantry in Southwest Harbor.

The coalition continues to seek donations to help offset the costs of services it provides. Contributions can be sent to the Maine Seacoast Mission, 127 West St., Bar Harbor, ME 04609. Please write "For MDI Campfire Coalition" in the memo line of the check.