

Energy assistance programs on radar

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) annually helps low income individuals with their bills related to heating and air conditioning in the summer.

U.S. Rep. Alma Adams (N.C. District 12) announced that the DHHS has released \$77.7 million to help North Carolina families stay warm this winter.

Adams was among 75 members of Congress last week who sent a letter to DHHS urging swift release of the funds. In total, more than \$3 billion was released nationwide.

"This is great news for the more than 220,000 North Carolinians who rely on energy assistance programs to keep warm during the winter and cool during the summer," Adams said in a release. "No one should have to choose between heating their homes or feeding their family. This announcement comes just in time for the winter weather season."

During the 2015 fiscal year, \$3.35 billion in LIHEAP funds were released. In the 2014 fiscal year, 6.6 million households got heating assistance and more than 1 million households got cooling assistance from LIHEAP.

In North Carolina, the program is known as LIEAP (Low Income Energy Assistance Program) and those in need locally apply for the assistance through The Salvation Army of Winston-Salem. The nonprofit takes applications for both LIEAP and the federally funded Crisis Intervention Program, which provides heating and cooling assistance for those in emergencies.

Households that apply for LIEAP don't need to be in an emergency. It provides a one-time payment to vendors to help with heating bills. Starting Dec. 1, seniors age 60 and over or a disabled person receiving benefits through the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) can apply for LIEAP.

Beginning Jan. 1, all other households can apply. They need to meet an income test, have reserves at or below \$2,250, be responsible for their heating bills and have at least one U.S. citizen or non-citizen who meets the eligibility criteria.

To make an appointment, applicants should call the Salvation Army Emergency Services Office on Cleveland Avenue once LIEAP begins. Applicants will need to bring documents proving their identity, income and assets of those living in the household. The program runs through March or until funds run out.

Salvation Army Director of Social Services Tashina Oladunjoye said the program is so heavily used that The Salvation Army adds extra hours and staff in January to help with the requests for heating assistance because the agency can get hundreds of calls a day for utility assistance. She said the LIEAP assistance ranges from \$100 to \$300 toward a household's heating bill.

"We have individuals who are the working poor — individuals who work every day, they work long hours and they still cannot meet ends, they can't get their bills paid on time or there's lots of overdues," she said. "So this helps them."

The Salvation Army Emergency Assistance Office is located at 901 Cleveland Avenue and can be contacted at 722-8721.

Delta Arts Center to feature works of Gastonia native

John Biggers

BY ASHLEA JONES
FOR THE CHRONICLE

John T. Biggers (1924–2001), an African-American muralist, painter, educator and Gastonia native, has not been forgotten. Winston-Salem Delta Fine Arts Center presents, "Remembering John Biggers," an exhibition of his prints and drawings.

The exhibit, from Nov. 3, 2015, through Jan. 30, 2016, will feature works from Winston-Salem Delta Fine Arts' permanent collection and the works from private and public collections across the state.

An opening reception will be at 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 5, in the Simona Atkins Allen Gallery at Delta Arts Center.

"Everyone should definitely come out," said Joanne Fant, an associate at the Delta Fine Arts Center.

Biggers came into prominence after the Harlem Renaissance. Biggers was introduced to art at the Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) after he enrolled in an art class taught by art educator Viktor Lowenfeld, a Jewish refugee from Austria.

"John Biggers is a native of North Carolina, and we always want to celebrate the achievements of our own," said Dr. Alison Fleming, secretary of the Board of Directors and co-chair of the exhibition committee at Winston-Salem Delta Fine Arts Inc. "At the Delta Arts Center, our exhibits often focus on artists in our com-



Submitted photos

Two pieces of John T. Biggers' art donated for display by WSSU are the *Harvesters II* and the *Black Key Drawing for Family Arc*.

State University and taught at Texas Southern University. He understood the significant role that art plays in all of our lives, and promoted this through education."

The relationship between Biggers and Delta Arts Center dates back to his participation in the landmark exhibition "Reflections: The Afro-American Artist," which was hosted by the Delta Arts Center and held at the Benton Convention Center in 1972.

A year after the exhibition, the center purchased the painting *Laundry Women* from Biggers and donated it to Winston-Salem State



A mural on the O'Kelly Library at Winston-Salem State University shows John T. Biggers' work.

University (WSSU). The "Remembering John Biggers" exhibition will feature two pieces donated by WSSU: the *Harvesters II* and the *Black Key Drawing for Family Arc*.

"The Remembering John Biggers' exhibition is a wonderful kind of retrospective of his work," stated Endia Beal, director of WSSU's Diggs Gallery. "You get to see many of his paintings, his drawings and really look at his study of sacro geometry and the African Aesthetic. I think the exhibition is going to be a wonderful commemoration of all the great things that he's done."

The current exhibition will highlight prints and drawings created by Biggers from the 1960s to the 1990s, including a limited edition of lithographs that accompany the poem "Our Grandmothers" by Dr. Maya Angelou.

"John Biggers is part of an elite group of artists that hail from North Carolina; remembering them and their art helps us to promote our state, and to encourage future artists," said Fleming. North Carolinians can relate to the ideas and images he depicts, and these pieces are a valuable part of our heritages."

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