



Walk for Warmth brings almost double the participants than last year

By **Jon Szerlag** | jszerlag@mlive.com on February 21, 2014 at 3:35 PM

JACKSON, MI – Facing a fierce wind and a bitter cold, several hundred participants walked the streets of Jackson for Walk for Warmth.

2014 Walk for Warmth in Jackson Consumers Energy Vice President of Customer Operations Patti Poppe talks about the 2014 Walk for Warmth in Jackson. Last year, the event helped 77 families in need. This year, they hope to triple that.

About 700 Consumers Energy employees and retirees participated in this year's event in Jackson. The company matches 2 to 1 for every dollar raised. "This is a wonderful cause," said Janice Bauer, a Consumers Energy employee who participated in the event. Walk for Warmth is a fundraising event sponsored by Consumers Energy and Jackson Community Action Agency. The funds raised go to the Community Action Agency to help Jackson residents in need of assistance in paying their utility bills. Last year, 77 households were helped with the money raised. "It all stays in Jackson," said Community Action Agency CEO Toby Berry. "This is great with all the support from Consumers and the community." This year, the organization hopes to triple the number of people helped, said Patti Poppe, Consumers vice president of customer operations.

With the harsh winter this year, Berry said the Community Action Agency has seen an increase in the number of people asking for help. "A couple hundred dollars in assistance can go a long way," Berry said. "It helps with making decisions of what bills are going to be paid." Last year about 400 Consumers Energy employees walked and raised roughly \$30,000. At last year's Walk for Warmth, there were roughly 400 Consumers Energy employees walking and roughly \$30,000 was raised. "They were people the agency would have been unable to help," Berry said of those who received assistance last year. "They are people who would have fallen through the cracks."