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Consumer alert

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SMART SHOPPER

CUB deflates gas myths

In the wake of a jump this month in natural gas prices, the Citizens Utility Board said Tuesday it has launched an online "Winter Survival Center" at www.citizensutilityboard.org that warns Chicago-area consumers about potentially expensive myths regarding their natural gas bills.

Along with answering questions about utility budget plans and how often utilities read customer meters, CUB offers energy-saving tips that can reduce consumer gas and electric bills.

For information, call CUB's Consumer Hotline at (800) 669-5556.

PRODUCT RECALL

Child's death prompts warning

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission on Tuesday advised consumers to stop using a certain type of baby crib after the death of a 6-month-old from Iowa.

The commission is recalling about 635,000 Dorel Asia cribs that were sold by Kmart, Sears, Wal-Mart and other stores from January 2005 through December 2009. The recall involves 20 crib models with drop sides as well as fixed front rails.

The cribs are being recalled because the drop side can detach from the crib, creating a space where a child can be trapped and suffocate or be strangled, and because a child can be trapped if one of the slats is broken or damaged.

The CPSC and Barbados-based Dorel Asia have received 31 reports of incidents involving drop-side cribs, including six incidents of children being trapped. The commission and company also received reports of 36 incidents of slat breakage, including seven reports of bruises and scratches to children and two reports of entrapment that resulted in no injury.

Consumers are urged to immediately stop using the recalled cribs and contact Dorel Asia for a free replacement kit. For information, visit www.dorel-asia.com or call the company at (866) 762-2304.

send items of interest to mnolan@southtownstar.com or call (708) 633-5952.

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