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For Immediate Release

## LICKING COUNTY UNITED WAY RECEIVES \$21,609 FROM AEP OHIO TO HELP WITH HOUSING IN HOLIDAY SEASON

*Part of \$15 Million "Partnership with Ohio" Program Focused on Hunger, Health and Housing*

49 United Way agencies and 11 foodbanks around Ohio will be able to help many more families this season, thanks to donations totaling \$1,000,000 that are being distributed in time for the holidays. The gifts from AEP Ohio come just in time to help the growing numbers of struggling families in the region.

The gift is part of AEP Ohio's three-year, \$15 million Partnership with Ohio program. In addition to the holiday donations to help with hunger, health and housing, in 2009, the program has helped families in need of assistance to pay their electric bills through the AEP Ohio Neighbor-to-Neighbor program.

The Licking County United Way, selected by AEP Ohio to coordinate the Licking County Housing funds, has awarded funding to the Licking County Coalition for Housing and Salvation Army. Funds will be used to assist AEP customers who are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level with rent, mortgage and rental deposit needs. AEP Customers in need of housing assistance may contact the Salvation Army at 740-345-8120 or the Licking County Coalition for Housing at 740-345-1920, or toll free at 1-877-421-5224. Local funding for hunger assistance was awarded to the Mid Ohio Foodbank, which partners with the Food Pantry Network to help those in need of food assistance in Licking County.

"AEP Ohio established the Partnership with Ohio program to provide meaningful assistance to Ohioans," said Joe Hamrock, president and chief operating officer for AEP Ohio. "The help of outstanding community resources like food banks and United Way agencies ensures that our contribution will be effective, and will be quickly used to provide healthy food on the table and other assistance for thousands of families throughout the region." AEP Ohio, a unit of American Electric Power, one of the largest electric utilities in the United States, provides electricity to nearly 1.5 million customers.

American Electric Power delivers electricity to more than 5 million customers in 11 states and ranks among the nation's largest generators of electricity, owning nearly 38,000 megawatts of generating capacity in the U.S.

The Licking County United Way works to create long-lasting changes that prevent problems from happening and provide a safety net of services that assist those in need. Working with volunteers and local nonprofits to develop the best opportunities for all, 57 funded programs served people 156,597 times last year.

The Salvation Army provides a wide range of emergency and social services, last year assisting 30,140 individuals with rent, mortgage and utility assistance; clothing; counseling; emergency shelter; food/meals and social skills development.

The Licking County Coalition for Housing provides transitional housing to homeless families and individuals and a one-stop homelessness prevention program that assisted 3,000 individuals last year with emergency rent/deposit/mortgage assistance, budget counseling, and landlord/tenant assistance.

The Food Pantry Network of Licking County coordinates the acquisition and distribution of emergency food supplies by working through its 32 member food agencies that distribute food or provide on-site feeding programs for the needy.

Mid Ohio Foodbank provides food to more than 500 emergency feeding sites across 20 counties in central and eastern Ohio. In 2008, the Foodbank distributed 30.8 million pounds of food and grocery products to their partner charities.

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