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News Release

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Minneapolis Stimulus Funding Helps Homeowners Save Energy

Funding expands energy savings program to reach 6,000 homes in Minneapolis

December 8, 2009 (MINNEAPOLIS)—Stimulus money is currently being targeted to homeowners in seven Minneapolis neighborhoods to assist with residential energy savings. Starting next year, the funding will help expand a program underway by the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE).

The Community Energy Services Program focuses on partnering with interested neighborhoods and community members in implementing community-based marketing to engage a significant fraction of a community in saving energy and money.

"In this economy, people are especially interested in saving money on their energy bills," said Carl Nelson, Program and Policy Manager, Center for Energy and Environment. "The additional funding through the stimulus money will enable CEE to reach more homeowners and make saving energy and money as easy as possible."

In order to obtain a critical mass of participants and leverage community interest, many residents volunteered to door-knock in their neighborhoods, inviting homeowners to participate in a workshop where information was presented. Thus, the program participation to date is very successful.

So far, over 500 Minneapolis residents have attended community workshops, with 98% of them signing up for follow-up Home Visits.

Attendance at a workshop early this fall was required in order to sign up for the home visit and to receive energy saving materials. Residents were required to pay \$20 for the up to \$400 package value.

Two qualified professionals conduct the home visit. They identify a home's unique energy needs, provide a blower door test to measure the air tightness, and help homeowners install materials in the home (such as compact fluorescent light bulbs, programmable thermostats, door weather-stripping, low-flow showerheads, gasket seals, pipe wrap, water heater thermometers). Other services are provided to make additional follow-up work easy, such as insulation. According to participant Lola Schoenrich of the Kingfield neighborhood in south Minneapolis, "the home visit crew was terrific. They were incredibly knowledgeable and showed me a number of ways I can reduce my energy use and save money in my home,"

"The City of Minneapolis is pleased to partner with CEE and help expand their program," said Cathy Polasky, Director of Economic Policy and Development. "The stimulus funding will help an additional 4,000 Minneapolis residents receive energy savings, which is money in a homeowner's pocket."

The Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) is a nonprofit with 30 years of experience in delivering energy efficiency programs to help Minneapolis residents save energy in their homes. CEE is partnering with CenterPoint Energy and Xcel Energy to provide this Community Energy Services Program for selected neighborhoods in Minneapolis. Funding was also provided by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) through the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

In February 2009, Congress passed and the President signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) which allocated \$3.2 billion to the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG), a U.S. Department of Energy program. The Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant program offers block grant recipients (cities, counties, and states) funds to implement strategies that reduce fossil fuel emissions in a way that is environmentally sustainable and maximize benefits for local and regional communities, reduce total energy use, and improve energy efficiency in the transportation, building, and other energy consuming sectors.

The City of Minneapolis received \$3.9 million in formula EECBG funds; \$705,000 is designated for the residential energy savings program underway. Other programs include a revolving loan fund for Minneapolis businesses to make energy efficiency and conservation upgrades (\$780,000); Climate Change grants to encourage citizens to take actions to reduce their energy use (\$75,000); and energy efficiency and conservation at local government facilities (\$1,950,000). The City, in partnership with the City of Saint Paul and the State of Minnesota, is in the process of applying for \$30 million in competitive energy efficiency stimulus funding through the Department of Energy's EECBG program.

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