



Community Planning and Economic Development Department

News Release

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Minneapolis City Goals: A Safe Place to Call Home □ Jobs & Economic Vitality □ Eco-Focused □ Livable Communities, Healthy Lives □ Many People, One Minneapolis □ A City That Works

Biden Announces Minneapolis Will Pilot Home Energy Score Program

Minneapolis one of only 10 U.S. communities selected to participate in Department of Energy program

November 9, 2010 (MINNEAPOLIS)—Vice President Joe Biden joined U.S. Department of Energy Secretary Steven Chu today to announce the Department of Energy has named Minneapolis one of 10 communities in the U.S. to pilot the Home Energy Score program. Similar to the Energy STAR labels for appliances, the pilot program will enable Minneapolis homeowners to obtain a label, or scoring, that recognizes the energy-efficiency improvements they have made. The Minneapolis effort will be funded in part through a grant from the City of Minneapolis.

The Home Energy Score will offer owners straightforward, reliable information about their homes' energy efficiency. A report provides consumers with a home energy score between 1 and 10 and includes customized, cost-effective recommendations that will help to reduce their energy costs, improve the comfort of their homes, and present opportunities or upgrades needed to increase their scores. The report will also show an owner how their home compares to others in the region.

"We are working hard in Minneapolis to create good jobs in the clean-energy economy, reduce our impact on the environment and save residents money, and I'm grateful to the Obama administration for recognizing our results thus far by allowing Minneapolis to participate in this innovative pilot program in home-energy savings," said **Mayor R.T. Rybak**. "It's one more important piece in our efforts to build economic capacity for the 21st century and make our city even more sustainable."

Minneapolis-based non-profit Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) will produce the label for 300 homes as part of their home energy savings program, Community Energy Services (CES). This program, already underway in Minneapolis neighborhoods, puts homeowners on a comprehensive path to achieving energy savings. According to **CEE's Executive Director Sheldon Strom**, "Our experience in working with thousands of homeowners is that they often choose to invest in improvements that will more visibly improve their home's equity, such as granite countertops, rather than in energy efficiency improvements like insulation, which you can't see. We are excited about the potential of an energy label to help Minneapolis homeowners make visible the energy efficiency improvements they have completed, and ultimately, be incorporated into the value of their home."

"The home energy visits are a great way for residents and their neighbors to learn more about saving on their energy bills," said **Council Member Elizabeth Glidden**, Chair, Committee on Regulatory Energy and Environment. "The rating system, piloted here in Minneapolis, will offer even more guidance to homeowners for saving money and will acknowledge the great work they've done."

More on the Community Energy Services (CES) Program

CES, a collaboration with the City and CEE, puts Minneapolis homeowners on a comprehensive path to achieving energy savings and is funded, in part, by a grant of \$705,000 the City received from the Department of Energy through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. A pilot program was launched last year, reaching 28 neighborhoods and 2,000 houses. The grant is being used to expand the program citywide, reaching a total of 6,000 homeowners in Minneapolis. These homeowners are expected to save an average of \$130 annually on energy costs. The program has also created 34 jobs for our local economy.

The program offers homeowners:

- Free educational workshops to teach homeowners how to lower their energy use and save money;
- Materials, which may include low flow showerheads, setback thermostat, compact fluorescent light bulbs, gasket seals, faucet aerators, pipe insulation to help participants save now;

- Customized home visits from qualified professionals who will identify additional ways for residents to save energy in their homes, including a blower door test;
- Personalized energy use inventory for the past 12 months and feedback for the next 12 months to show homeowners how these low-cost/no-cost measures resulted in decreased energy use, as well as allowing participants to compare their energy use to that of similar homes;
- Access to financing, incentives, and rebates for those wishing to complete larger weatherization projects.

Two qualified professionals conduct the home visit. They identify a home's unique energy needs, provide a blower door test to measure air leaks, and help homeowners install materials in the home such as compact fluorescent light bulbs, programmable thermostat, attic door weather-stripping, low-flow showerhead, gasket seals, pipe wrap and water heater thermometers.

For information on upcoming workshops in your neighborhood, contact Kyle Boehm at 612-219-7334.

CES is a full-service, one-stop residential energy efficiency program and has served more than 2,000 homes since October 2009. CEE is a nonprofit organization based in Minneapolis. CEE was established in 1979 and is the leading nonprofit resource on energy efficiency and financing opportunities in the state.

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