

May 2009 Volume 8

## Community Energy Challenge Monthly Update

Welcome to the *Community Energy Challenge Monthly Update*, a monthly publication by EPA New England promoting energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy.

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) **Welcome to the Newest Members of the Community Energy Challenge: East Hampton, Weston and Canton, Connecticut**  
EPA New England welcomes the communities of East Hampton, Weston, and Canton, Connecticut, the newest members of the Community Energy Challenge! These communities have pledged to form a local energy committee, benchmark their municipal buildings, and reduce their energy use by 10%. These steps will help them to save money and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. With these additions there are 137 CEC members. Welcome!

## **2) Department Of Energy Selects Newest Recipients of Solar America Showcase Awards**

The U.S. Department of Energy announced three new winners of Solar America Showcase awards in Richmond, California. The Solar America Showcases effort is run by DOE's Solar Energy Technologies Program and provides technical assistance to large solar energy installation projects that are highly visible, novel, and replicable throughout the Nation.

This most recent competition added three award winners:

Sequoia Foundation (Berkeley, CA)

Forest City Hawaii (Ohana and the Big Island, HA)

The National Community Builders (Columbus, OH)

All showcase projects receive free DOE technical assistance utilizing experts from the national laboratories universities and a competitively selected engineering firm funded in FY09. These competitions are part of DOE's strategy to accelerate and advance solar technology and energy adoption and integration. For more information on the Solar America Program go to:

[http://www1.eere.energy.gov/solar/solar\\_america/index.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/solar/solar_america/index.html)

### **ARTICLES**

#### ***1) Utilities plan to let consumers watch energy use***

Four utilities will be filing proposals with the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, outlining "smart grid" pilot programs, which are required under the Green Communities Act that was signed last year by Governor Deval Patrick. Under National Grid's two-year pilot proposal, approximately 15,000 meters that read energy consumption almost in real-time would be installed in homes and businesses in a 30-square-mile area of Worcester (that includes Webster and Tatnuck squares, Airport Hill, and the city's northwest area). Customers could access the information via the Internet, by thermostat readout, or through text messaging, and use the data to change their consumption patterns. Program participants are expected to save 5 percent, or about \$70 a year, on their energy bills.

NStar's plan, meanwhile, calls for partnering with Tendril Networks Inc., a Colorado energy-efficiency company, to provide nearly 3,000 customers in Newton and Hopkinton with energy-consumption information - accessible on the Web - gathered from electricity meters every 15 seconds. Two-way communication between NStar and consumers will also allow the company to eventually ask customers to help reduce electricity consumption during peak-demand periods.

For more information go to:

[http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/green/articles/2009/03/31/utilities\\_plan\\_to\\_let\\_consumers\\_watch\\_energy\\_use/?s\\_campaign=8315](http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/green/articles/2009/03/31/utilities_plan_to_let_consumers_watch_energy_use/?s_campaign=8315)

#### ***2) Stamford, Connecticut benefits from partnership with Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund***

In partnership with the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF) and Connecticut Light & Power, the City of Stamford has participated in over 50 energy efficiency projects - both retrofit and new construction - since 1998. The city has implemented many efficiency improvements through the Energy Conscious Blueprint and Energy Opportunities programs, including upgrades at the community center, government center and to downtown streetlights.

Among the projects undertaken was an energy efficiency upgrade at the city's Terry Conner Ice Rink. The city has saved energy and money at this facility with the implementation of:

- High efficiency T-5 lighting
- High efficiency chiller system
- Variable frequency drives on pumps and motors
- High efficiency ice system that allows ice temperature to be higher than average

Through its commitment to energy efficiency, the city of Stamford has achieved a total annual kilowatt-hour savings of more than 11.4 million. This equates to a 15 percent reduction in energy use and a total annual cost savings of \$1,260,710.

For more information go to: [http://www.neep.org/newsletter/1Q2009/case\\_study.html](http://www.neep.org/newsletter/1Q2009/case_study.html)

### ***3) Three Massachusetts cities take the New Hampshire Carbon Challenge***

Three cities in Massachusetts — Reading, Lynnfield and Williamstown — have made it to the New Hampshire Carbon Challenge's Top 10. The program and Web site has a New England carbon calculator. More than 400 Massachusetts households have used it to reduce energy consumption, lower energy bills and minimize carbon loading to the atmosphere. The calculator and other tools help users better understand how much they will save by taking actions including ensuring proper automobile tire pressure, eliminating the dry cycle on the dishwasher and changing to compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). The program has seen more than 1,400 households save 9.2 billion pounds of carbon and more than \$1 million since its launch in October 2006.

The Carbon Challenge partners with schools and other colleges to develop programs where secondary education students can track their community's progress.

For more information and to begin tracking your progress, go to <http://carbonchallenge.sr.unh.edu/calculator.jsp>

### ***4) New school built to Northeast Collaboration for High Performance Schools specifications***

After school vacation week this past February, students and teachers at the Profile School in Bethlehem, New Hampshire moved into their new classrooms. According to Principal Michael Kelley, "It is going wonderfully. The instructional spaces are just beautiful." Each classroom has six windows providing views and a healthy supply of natural daylight. The rooms are also quiet, colorful, thermally comfortable and energy efficient. Profile School had been under construction since 2007, but students and teachers were able to occupy portions of the building throughout the multi-phase project.

The school is one of the first in New Hampshire to be designed to the Northeast CHPS protocol, a guideline for the design and construction of schools that are resource and energy efficient, healthy, comfortable, and environmentally friendly.

For more information go to: <http://www.neep.org/HPSE/profile.newsletter.pdf>

### ***5) Keene municipal employees win first phase of Carbon Challenge***

Keene was announced the winner of the first phase of the Keene and Portsmouth Carbon Challenges, a friendly carbon "throw down," between Keene and Portsmouth municipal staff and residents, at an Earth Day awards ceremony with Governor Lynch at the State House. Keene was determined the winner on a percentage basis with a participation rate of 55% of municipal employees versus Portsmouth's 41%. Keene Mayor Pregent is justifiably proud of Keene's accomplishment as he stated, "Keene municipal employees came through with flying colors. The Keene/Portsmouth "Throw Down" is a statement worth repeating in every town, city and village in NH. Yes you can be part of a great community action plan; to reduce the greenhouse gases, save money and have all of our employees be proud to be winners of this groundbreaking initiative of UNH, and the NH Carbon Challenge."

For more information go to: <http://www.seacoastonline.com/articles/20090422-NEWS-90422032>

### ***6) Governor recognizes winners of the Vermont School Carbon Challenge***

Governor Douglas congratulated the winning schools in the Vermont School Carbon Challenge, who will receive \$5,000 toward a future energy efficiency project. The top high school was Hazen Union High School in Hardwick, whose team tallied up almost 23 tons of saved CO2 emissions. The winning middle school, with 22 tons saved, was Richmond Middle School in Hanover, New Hampshire – home to Norwich middle school students. The No. 1 elementary school was Salisbury Community School, whose zipCO2 team reduced emissions by 5 tons.

The top team overall was the Essex High Tech Green Hornets, whose 244 members led the charge to reduce almost 37 tons of CO2 emissions. “Together, all the schools saved more than 114 tons of carbon emissions. That’s the equivalent of not driving 250,000 miles a year or taking 15 passenger vehicles off the road,” the Governor said. “I am so proud of the work these students have done to lower their carbon footprint.”

For more information on the Vermont School Carbon Challenge go to:

<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/site/html/VSCC/>

## **EVENTS**

### **1) Northeast Energy Efficiency Summit, May 27-28, Albany, NY**

The 2009 Northeast Energy Efficiency Summit takes place on May 27 and 28 in Albany, New York and includes:

- Workforce development workshop
- Municipal leader recognition program and reception
- Full day regional conference featuring policy and application panels
- Exhibition of efficiency services and technologies
- Business leader recognition program luncheon

Details, including online registration can be found at:

<http://www.neep.org/conference/2009/index.html>

### **2) ICLEI Northeast & Mid-Atlantic Regional Workshop May 14-15, 2009, White Plains, NY**

Tap the expertise and power of the ICLEI network during the 2009 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Regional Workshop. Join us for a one-day workshop packed with information and opportunities including:

- Regional networking opportunities, with a reception on May 14
- Interactive trainings
- Building a Green Economy with Green Jobs
- Transportation, Smart Growth and Sustainability
- Federal Climate Policy
- Climate and Energy Action Planning
- Strategies for Implementing Your Climate Action Plan
- Municipal Clean Energy Planning
- Small Communities Toolkit and Resources

Details can be found at: [www.icleiusa.org/northeast](http://www.icleiusa.org/northeast)

### **3) New Hampshire Sustainable Energy Association screening of *Kilowatt Ours*, May 14th at 6:30 pm Red River Theater in Concord, NH**

The New Hampshire Sustainable Energy Association (NHSEA) will hold a screening of the movie *Kilowatt Ours*, the story of filmmaker and conservationist Jeff Barrie's journey across the U.S. to document our energy-related problems and present practical, cost-saving solutions for consumers.

Widespread problems revealed in *Kilowatt Ours* include mountaintop removal, air pollution, global warming, childhood asthma, and mercury contamination. The film illustrates practical

solutions that can help homeowners save approximately \$1000 per year on energy bills, while helping the environment and protecting human health.

A panel discussion will be held after the screening about ways people in the community can save energy in their own lives. If you are interested in participating please contact: Madeline McElaney, Program and Outreach Coordinator, New Hampshire Sustainable Energy Association, 603-226-4732.

### **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **1) EPA's Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) Grant Program**

EPA's Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) grant solicitation is open from now until May 20th. It includes an expanded section to support green building research by small businesses. For more information, see details at: [http://www.epa.gov/ncer/rfa/2009/2009\\_sbir\\_phase1.html](http://www.epa.gov/ncer/rfa/2009/2009_sbir_phase1.html)

#### **2) Update on American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Weatherization Block Grants**

The first of nearly \$5 billion ARRA funds for weatherization has begun flowing to the states. The goal of weatherization is to improve the energy efficiency, safety, and comfort of low-income homes. Funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act significantly boosts the amount of work that can be done on each housing unit and the number of homes that will receive attention. To meet this goal, states anticipate hiring energy auditors and weatherization professionals. There are many components to ARRA funding for the Federal Weatherization Assistance Program. Here is a brief explanation of the guidelines and how the program will work:

- This existing program provides for insulation, air sealing and at times furnace repair and replacement and other measures in low-income households
- Weatherization funding is significantly increased under the ARRA, for example, in New Hampshire, funding is approximately \$23.2 M over and above the allocation of approximately \$3 million to the state under normal federal funding , although it differs in each state.
- ARRA funding will allow more homes to be weatherized and create new jobs to provide these services
- ARRA increased the average investment allowed for each dwelling unit weatherized, from \$2,500 to \$6,500
- ARRA raised the eligibility from 150% to 200% of the federal poverty guidelines
- Funds began to arrive April 1, 2009. A portion of the funds can be used to recruit and train auditors and work crews
- All funds must be obligated no later than September 30, 2010 and funds may be expended over a three year period, that is until March 31, 2012

For details on the Weatherization Block Grant in your state please contact the appropriate State agency:

**Connecticut:** Office of Policy and Management-Energy Management Unit:

[http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2994&q=386250&opmnav\\_gid=1808](http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2994&q=386250&opmnav_gid=1808)

**Maine:** Office of the Governor: <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>

**Massachusetts:** Department of Energy Resources:

[http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoeaagencylanding&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Grants+%26+Technical+Assistance&L2=Guidance+%26+Technical+Assistance&L3=Agencies+and+Divisions&L4=Department+of+Energy+Resources+\(DOER\)&sid=Eoea](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoeaagencylanding&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Grants+%26+Technical+Assistance&L2=Guidance+%26+Technical+Assistance&L3=Agencies+and+Divisions&L4=Department+of+Energy+Resources+(DOER)&sid=Eoea)

**New Hampshire** Office of Energy and Policy:

<http://www.nh.gov/oep/recovery/weatherization.htm>

**Rhode Island** Office of Energy Resources: <http://www.energy.ri.gov/index.php>

**Vermont** Department of Public Service: <http://publicservice.vermont.gov/energy-efficiency/energy-efficiency.html>

For more information on ARRA Energy Funds for States, Local Governments and Tribes go to: <http://www.eere.energy.gov/recovery/>

### **TIP OF THE MONTH**

#### **1) COOL Gatherings Neighborly Way to Spread Green Ideas**

The Williamstown, Massachusetts CO2 Lowering Committee is launching a series of seriously COOL Neighborhood Gatherings to share ways to conserve energy and affect climate change. The COOL Committee has set a town wide goal of reducing carbon emissions by 10 percent below the year 2000 level by 2010. According to the carbon emissions inventory conducted by the committee using data from 2000, more than 50 percent of the town's carbon emissions came from residential energy use in homes and vehicles.

The gatherings will include information on free home energy audits, incentives to pay for home energy improvements, options for energy-efficient lighting, supporting renewable energy through electric bills, options for installing renewable energy at home or promoting renewable energy installations in the community, and how to support the COOL Challenge and calculate your home's carbon footprint. Attendees will also receive a reusable shopping bag, an energy-efficient bulb, and a length of clothesline to take advantage of solar drying.

For more information go to: <http://www.iberkshires.com/story/30710/COOL-Gatherings-Neighborly-Way-to-Spread-Green-Ideas.html>

### **TOOLS /TRAINING**

#### **1) Green Government 2009 Webinars**

Green Government 2009 is designed to offer a dynamic opportunity for learning new strategies and best practices for greening your operations. This webinar series will provide elaborate resources dedicated to help set a strategic plan, measure inefficiencies, execute a plan, improve employee buy-in and meet the stringent demands of tomorrow. Sessions include:

- Green Office for Government: May 14, 2009 1pm EST
- Carbon Footprint Strategies: May 28, 2009 1pm EST
- Green Buildings for Government June 11, 2009 1pm EST

For more information go to:

[http://www.altamont-group.com/content/pdf/41/Green\\_Government\\_2009.pdf](http://www.altamont-group.com/content/pdf/41/Green_Government_2009.pdf)

#### **2) ENERGY STAR Webinars of Interest to Communities:**

##### **Thursday, May 14, 2009**

Starting time: 1:00 pm, Eastern Daylight Time

Duration: 2 hours

Presenters: Dr. Sharon L. Levin

Description: This training will cover strategies for improving the Energy Performance Ratings of office buildings. You will learn how to identify and quantify low-cost opportunities to improve building and portfolio-wide energy performance in operations and maintenance, occupants' behaviors, lighting, controls, and equipment. Estimated energy and financial savings are discussed throughout the training. An understanding of U.S. EPA's Portfolio Manager is strongly recommended, however all participants are welcome. Who should participate: Commercial real estate owners, property managers, and building engineers

**Tuesday, May 19, 2009**

Starting time: 1:30 pm, Eastern Daylight Time (GMT -04:00, New York)

Duration: 1 hour

Presenters: Robert Huang

Description: PC Power Management: This presentation describes an ENERGY STAR offering that is helping organizations realize substantial energy and financial savings available from computer and monitor power management. This training introduces an innovative software tool that enables monitor power management from a central location, as well as educational outreach material. Organizations utilizing this free software (which may be downloaded from the Web) can save \$10 to \$50 per computer. Who should participate: IT staff, energy managers, and building managers.

**Wednesday, May 20, 2009**

Starting time: 2:00 pm, Eastern Daylight Time

Duration: 1 hour

Presenters: Steve Jurovics

Description: Purchasing products with the ENERGY STAR label can substantially reduce your organization's energy use and costs. This training includes information about EPA support to help your organization purchase products with superior energy performance; guidelines that define energy performance for numerous products; sample procurement language for stipulating energy performance attributes to vendors; lists of ENERGY STAR labeled products; and energy savings software that calculates the life cycle costs of ENERGY STAR products and their less efficient counterparts.

For more information and to register for these webinars go to:

<https://energystar.webex.com/mw03051/mywebex/default.do?siteurl=energystar&service=7%20>

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All 137 communities in New England Community Energy Challenge program will automatically receive this email unless they indicate that they would like to be removed from the list. All other New England communities that would like to receive it are welcome to subscribe as well (for more information on joining the Challenge please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/region1/eco/energy/energy-challenge.html>.) For additions or deletions from this email list or if you have ideas on information that you would like to see in future monthly updates please contact Linda Darveau of EPA New England at [darveau.linda@epa.gov](mailto:darveau.linda@epa.gov) or at (617) 918-1718.