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GOVERNOR'S ENERGY OFFICE APPROVES INITIAL AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT SPENDING FOR WEATHERIZATION

The Governor's Energy Office (GEO) announced today its approval of initial spending for weatherization assistance under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), with an allocation of \$1.7 million to five regional agencies that specialize in reducing energy costs for households.

This initial funding marks only the first step in a program slated to conduct \$80 million worth of weatherization work over the next three years in communities across Colorado. The five agencies approved to begin spending recovery dollars are the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (NWCCOG); the Northeastern Colorado Association of Local Governments; Arapahoe County Housing and Community Development Services, the Energy Resource Center, serving the Colorado Springs and Castle Rock region, and the Pueblo County Department of Human Services.

The GEO is also preparing to solicit proposals from local governments and nonprofits for ARRA-related weatherization work in other regions of the state. This is an opportunity for more parties in Colorado to be involved in state's economic recovery and in advancing its New Energy Economy.

"Recovery money designated for weatherization will put people to work immediately, boost the economy with purchases of equipment and supplies and cut energy costs for those who need the savings most," said GEO director Tom Plant. "It has the added benefit of shaving our energy consumption and reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

Weatherization assistance work is intended to cut energy costs for income qualified households, including for the elderly, people with disabilities, children and high energy-use homes. Energy efficiency services include energy audits, home insulation and the installation of high efficiency appliances such as furnaces and refrigerators. The weatherization assistance program also provides for client education designed to cut energy consumption and save money on household utility bills.

"We intend to put this money to work immediately, hiring more workers and buying more equipment to help our fellow citizens cut their energy costs," said Steve Getz, weatherization program manager for the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments. "We believe making homes more energy efficient and more comfortable will give our communities an important economic boost."

Households that qualify for weatherization services include those where residents are already receiving financial assistance under other programs, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP), Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid. Eligibility can also be determined by household income. Under ARRA, households making up to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible.

For additional information about the weatherization assistance program, visit the GEO website, at www.colorado.gov/energy

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