

# ECOWISE

December 2010 | Volume 8, Issue 10

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## IN THIS ISSUE

- » Progress Energy's Neighborhood Energy Saver Program Complements Housing Authority Energy Saving Efforts
- » Recovery Act Grants Used to Create Energy Efficient Green Communities in Public Housing
- » Upcoming Events
- » Resident's Corner

## Progress Energy's Neighborhood Energy Saver Program Complements Housing Authority Energy Saving Efforts

In October 2010, Progress Energy completed the first Neighborhood Energy Saver (NES) program in North Carolina. The innovative pilot project assists residents of low-income neighborhoods throughout the South with escalating energy costs. Utility customers in single- and multi-family housing receive a variety of measures, such as home energy assessments, education services, rebates for efficiency improvements, and free energy improvements.



Residents viewing energy improvement exhibits.  
Photo: Progress Energy

Federal and State guidelines and census data are used to objectively select communities where the program would be most beneficial. In Asheville, the census tracts included all of the residents of Pisgah View, and a few who lived in Livingston and Erskine Apartments. These are all public housing developments administered by Housing Authority of the City of Asheville (HACA).

The program came at an opportune moment for HACA, which had recently switched to resident-paid utilities. The new utility customers gained tools to understand their own consumption and save energy. Participants received free improvements including water heat wraps and insulation for water pipes, refrigerator coil brushes, wall plate thermometers, water heater temperature checks and adjustments, door sweeps, caulking, weather stripping, and HVAC filters for a year.

HACA Chief Operations Officer David Nash said, "Increased self-sufficiency is our top goal for residents in public housing communities and we feel moving towards a greener community and community collaboration lead the way down that path." In spring 2010, Progress Energy reported it had reached 86 percent participation in its target neighborhoods in Asheville and Florence/Marion, SC. HACA estimates 600 residents benefited from the program.

The NES effort complements HACA's energy efficiency strategy. Last winter, thanks to savings in water and utilities that exceeded previously guaranteed amounts, HACA received approval for Energy Performance Contract (EPC) expansion. Under that expansion, Siemens Industry, Inc. installed 1,200 new or retrofitted low-flow toilets, 3,600 low-flow aerators and showerheads; weatherized over 1,100 housing units; insulated more than 750 housing units; and replaced windows in 150 dwelling units. The energy efficiency work done over the last 5 years is guaranteed to save 41 million gallons of water, 680,000 kWh of electricity, and 180,000 therms of gas annually. This is an annual guaranteed savings of over \$750,000. Over 2,800 HACA residents live in units improved under this project.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- » World Energy Engineering Conference/Ecobuild America Conference and Expo  
December 8-10, 2010  
Washington, DC  
<http://www.energycongress.com/>
- » 2011 RESNET Building Performance Conference  
February 28-March 2, 2011  
Lake Buena Vista, FL  
<http://archive.resnet.us/conference/>



NES team member cleaning refrigerator coils.

Photo: Progress Energy

With \$2.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grants from HUD, HACA is replacing 6,000 windows throughout the three housing developments.

For the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville, contact: David Nash at [dnash@HACA.org](mailto:dnash@HACA.org) or 828-258-1222

For more information on Progress Energy and the Neighborhood Energy Saver Program, go to: <http://www.progress-energy.com>

## Recovery Act Grants Used to Create Energy Efficient Green Communities in Public Housing

HUD has awarded \$600 million in funds under ARRA, which are making public housing communities more energy efficient, comfortable, and sustainable. Funded through the Public Housing Capital Fund, these grants are called Capital Funds Recovery Competition (CFRC). These funds are allowing 169 public housing agencies (PHAs) across the U.S. to create energy efficient green communities. These funds are being used for moderate rehabilitation and also for major rehabilitation or new construction. Activities that PHAs are undertaking may include development of connections to neighborhoods and green spaces, site improvements that provide surface water management techniques that capture, retain, infiltrate, and/or harvest rainwater; water conservation through water-conserving appliances, fixtures and efficient irrigation; energy efficiency that meets Energy Star standards for new construction; and use of renewable energy resources. Moderate activities include installation of high efficiency boilers and heaters, programmable thermostats, and Energy Star appliances.

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan said, "This Recovery Act funding will not only give housing authorities the resources they need to jump start production of affordable housing, but it will also reduce energy costs, mitigate negative environmental impacts, while creating much-needed 'green' jobs across the country."

To keep the momentum going, HUD issued guidance to PHAs and HUD Field Offices with information and procedures including meeting expenditure and obligations deadlines of CFRC grants. The notice includes the creation of energy efficient (Category 4) obligation and expenditure deadline/due dates. Notice PIH 2010-34(HA) was issued on August 10, 2010.

Additional information on data collection, reporting requirements and other Recovery Act provision can be found at: <http://bit.ly/b8onXA>

## Resident's Corner

Weatherize your home to keep warm on windy winter days. Air leaks can increase your heating bill up to 40 percent, so spend a weekend preparing your home to stay toasty during the cold upcoming months. If you, as a tenant, do not have approval to make these changes yourself, you can request these repairs from the maintenance staff responsible for your home.

- Tape clear plastic film to the inside of your window frames. (Tip: you can buy plastic sheets which are made especially for this purpose. They come with double-sided tape and detailed instructions for installation.)
- If you have windows that you never open, consider sealing them with rope caulk. Don't seal them shut permanently – you might need quick ventilation or an escape route during an emergency.
- Remove any window air conditioning units that are still in the window.
- Lower your thermostat by 2 or 3 degrees when you will be away for several hours or all day.
- Lower your thermostat several more degrees overnight and pile on the blankets.
- To cut out drafts under doors or windows, roll up a towel or rug and cover the open space. Or sew a door draft stopper out of cloth, old jeans, or recycled tights. These can be sewn by hand or by machine. This example uses rice, sand, or kitty litter, but you could also put in a little gravel or dry beans to keep the stopper in place: <http://bit.ly/byTycZ>



Image: Lionbrand.com

## Contact Us:

### Public and Indian Housing Information Resource Center (PIH IRC)

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Gambrills, MD 21054

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