



Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
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February 2010 Central Vermont Energy Program

Background

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission has received economic stimulus funding to assist municipalities and the Washington County Court House with implementing energy efficiency measures. CVRPC has funds available to perform energy and lighting audits on municipally-owned buildings and potentially will have funds available to undertake subsequent weatherization measures identified by the audits.

CVRPC also anticipates receiving additional funding from the VT Department of Public Service to provide technical assistance to new and existing town energy committees with primary focus on committee development (i.e. capacity building) and project implementation. Anticipated start date is June 2010.

The overall goal of the Central Vermont Energy Program is to improve municipal energy efficiency and promote municipal energy committee sustainability. The Program period is three years, ending in December 2012.

Energy Audits and Weatherization Grants

What is an energy audit?

Energy Audits provide valuable information about a building's energy use and outlines measures to improve a building's energy performance. Energy audits generally include:

- § Evaluation of insulation effectiveness;
- § Assessment of the heating system efficiency and safety;
- § Steps to improve the comfort and durability of the building (including moisture and ventilation problems);
- § Prioritization and cost of energy-saving improvements; and
- § Identification of energy-efficiency financing.

The purpose of an energy audit is to identify and prioritize energy efficiency measures based upon effectiveness and cost-benefits analysis. Audits are undertaken by licensed contractors.

Municipalities that wish to have a municipal energy and lighting audit undertaken and/or have access to weatherization funds are asked to enroll in the CV Energy Program. CVRPC anticipates funding at least two audits per municipality. To enroll, please complete the Central Vermont Energy Program Enrollment Form.

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission will contract with certified contractor(s) to perform the energy audits. The contractor(s) will be chosen based upon a competitive *Request for Proposals* process coordinated by CVRPC. The chosen contractor(s) will then schedule the audit process directly with the town. The contractor will be available to attend one public meeting to share the audit findings with the town. This will also be scheduled directly with the town. All audits will be completed by October 2010.

With a completed energy audit a municipality will have the necessary information to make informed decisions about steps to increase their buildings' energy efficiency. CVRPC expects to have funding available to assist towns with the implementation of some of the audit recommendations.

The Benefits of Implementing an Audit

- § Saves money of energy bills
- § Decreases greenhouse gases and emissions
- § Provides a healthier indoor environment
- § Increases a building's life cycle
- § Decreases some on-going maintenance work

Weatherization funding will be available to towns on a reimbursement basis. Towns will be responsible for hiring a professional contractor and/or coordinating volunteers to undertake the work. Funds will be allocated to towns on a per capita basis, currently estimated to be

\$3.00 per/person. For example, a town with a population of 4,000 may expect to receive \$12,000 in weatherization funding. CVRPC will work with towns to identify and prioritize eligible, reimbursable weatherization work. For questions about the reimbursement process, please contact Laurie Emery at 229-0389.

Municipalities that have already received audits on municipal buildings by a qualified contractor are potentially eligible to receive weatherization funding assistance.

In order to track the success of the program, municipalities will be asked to provide follow-up information about the results of the audit, implemented work and other energy efficiency measures. Your town's energy committee could be helpful with this reporting. CVRPC will provide a simple worksheet to be completed a year after the energy audit is completed.

Before having an energy audit, a municipality may want to consider the following suggestions:

a.) Form a team/steering committee – Identify a group of people who will be responsible for guiding the audit and weatherization process. This group can help by gaining municipal and public support of the process, coordinating volunteers to implement some of the weatherization measures, securing funding for audit recommendations, documenting and monitoring results, and developing a strategy for additional municipal energy efficiency improvements.

This may be the task of an existing municipal energy committee or could be an ad hoc committee. This could be a great catalyst to start a new energy team! For more information on starting an energy team, check out:

§ *The Vermont Energy and Climate Action Guide*, available at www.vecan.net/publications.php.

§ *A Guide to Improving Energy Efficiency in Vermont Municipal Buildings*, available at www.centralvtplanning.org/EnergyResources.html.

b.) Prioritize municipal buildings – Many towns have at least two municipal buildings, maybe more. Before deciding which building(s) to enroll in the program, we encourage you to review each building's energy costs over the last 12 months (electric and heat) to better understand the current usage. Further, we encourage you to conduct a walk through assessment to visually inspect buildings to identify potential air leaks in basements, attics and walls; examine insulation levels; look at the status/quality of the heating equipment; and examine lighting and other electricity-using equipment. This information can help identify where the greatest gain could be in energy efficiency. For more information about what to look for during a walk through assessment see: *The Guide to Improving Energy Efficiency in Vermont Municipal Buildings* cited above.

c.) Identify additional funding sources – Audit recommendations may range from simple weatherization measures such as caulking around windows and changing out light bulbs to sealing air leaks in attics and basements and retrofitting a building's heating and cooling system. The Central Vermont Energy Program is designed to help municipalities get a jump start on energy efficiency. However, some audit recommendations may exceed the program's parameters. Municipalities are encouraged to identify additional funding sources to continue energy efficiency on the municipal level.

Resources

Below is a list of website and publications to assist with municipal energy efficiency:

§ *Guide to Improving Energy Efficiency in Vermont Municipal Buildings*. Prepared by Paul Markowitz, VT Chapter Sierra Club. Includes info about building support, walk through assessments and energy efficiency resources and funding. www.centralvtplanning.org/EnergyResources.html.

§ *Clean Energy Guide Book: Understanding Vermont's Clean Energy Resources*. Prepared by Vermont Public Interest Research Group. Identifies resources and funding sources for business, local governments and citizens. www.vpirg.org/cleanenergyguide.

§ *Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy and Historic Preservation: A Guide for Historic District Commissions*. Prepared by Clean Air - Cool Planet. A Guide for preservationists, local energy committees and homeowners regarding energy efficiency in historic homes and buildings. www.cleanair-coolplanet.org/for_communities/HDCGuide.pdf.

§ Efficiency Vermont. Efficiency Vermont has a range of incentive programs for improving both electrical and thermal efficiency. www.encyvermont.com.

§ Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network. VECAN helps start and support town energy and climate action committees in their efforts to save energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and advance renewable energy projects. www.vecan.net.

§ Clean Energy Development Fund. The goal of the Fund is to increase the development and deployment of cost-effective and environmentally sustainable electric power resources – primarily with respect to renewable energy resources, and the use of combined heat and power technologies - in Vermont. http://publicservice.vermont.gov/energy/ee_cleanenergyfund.html.

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