



## Utilities Help Commercial Customers Become More Efficient

*Rochester Public Utilities Wins MEEA's Inspiring Efficiency MARKETING Award*

Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance announced today that Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) won the Inspiring Efficiency MARKETING Award for developing a Commercial Communications Plan to maximize commercial customers' participation in efficiency programs. RPU's commercial customers are the biggest users of energy and surpassed the utility's energy savings goals in 2006 and 2007.

"Our 2005 infrastructure study showed if we spent a little bit more money and achieved more kilowatt hour (kWh) savings, we could make a measurable impact through our commercial programs," said Patty Hanson, RPU's Manager of Marketing and External Affairs, "In 2006, we set a goal of saving approximately 9 million in kWh and actually surpassed that goal by 6%. As of November 1, we have already surpassed our 2007 goal by 26% with energy savings of more than 14 million kWh. This program works."

The plan's goal is to guide customers to install energy efficient equipment and appliances and take advantage of existing efficiency programs. This promotes both the Conserve & Save rebate program, which includes rebates for high efficiency equipment and appliances (e.g. Energy Star<sup>®</sup> appliances, lighting, HVAC) and the Partnering in Energy Solutions program. The primary purpose of Partnering in Energy Solutions is to provide commercial customers with expert help in managing their energy use. Advertising methods include paper and digital billboards, TV ads, radio ads, web site banner ads, newspaper ads, utility newsletters, bill inserts, and educational opportunities. Included in all of these methods were customer testimonials. RPU also partnered with the local gas utility, Minnesota Energy Resources, on many of these efforts.

The idea for the Commercial Communications Plan came from feedback from focus groups that were held in early 2006. Commercial customers were telling the organization that they were not utilizing the programs because they were not aware of them – a clear marketing issue. Appliance rebate programs are strongly liked and supported by both residential and business customers, though most commercial and industrial customers don't think rebates are available to them. Rebates, they say, do affect the buying behavior of residential and commercial/industrial customers.

"The campaign has drawn attention from throughout the state of Minnesota," said Alecia Ward, President of Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance. "Awareness of these efficiency programs is critical. Two very prominent organizations that have taken notice are Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) and CapX2020. Most importantly Rochester Public Utilities' results in kWh savings were highlighted and shown for other utilities to see."

### **Summary of MEEA's other 2008 Inspiring Efficiency Award recipients, recognizing the Midwest's efficiency leaders:**

**Inspiring Efficiency EDUCATION Award**—Schools for Energy Efficiency for implementing a program to save energy and money by changing behavior throughout school districts through increasing energy awareness among operations staff, students, teachers, and administrators. The program is in 400

schools, resulting in average energy savings of 10-20% and avoiding \$9.2million in energy costs in its first four years.

**Inspiring Efficiency IMPACT Award**—Miracit Development Corporation for developing Green View Estates. The first “green” subdivision of the City of Columbus, Ohio, the site upholds rigorous environmental standards while producing affordable homes. Homes in the subdivision are 25 to 40% more efficient than standard homes, saving \$900 per year.

**Inspiring Efficiency INNOVATION Award**—George Bialecki for founding Alternative Energy Builders, a corporation that builds energy efficient communities, and for founding Alternative Energy Living, a non-profit foundation focused on research and energy efficiency education.

**Inspiring Efficiency LEADERSHIP Award**—Minnesota: Senator D. Scott Dibble, Representative Jeremy Kalin, Sheldon Strom from Center for Energy and Environment, and Christy Brusven of the Department of Commerce for their coalition effort to lead the first, most comprehensive energy policy adoption in the Midwest.

**Inspiring Efficiency LEADERSHIP Award**—Illinois: Senator Don Harmon and Anne Pramagiorre from Commonwealth Edison for their leadership to gain adoption of the Affordable, Clean Energy Standard, creating a 2% efficiency standard for Illinois.

**Inspiring Efficiency LEADERSHIP Award**—Ann Arbor, Michigan: The Ann Arbor Energy Office for its long-standing commitment to sustainable energy use. The Energy Office manages projects and programs, develops information resources, and provides expert advice to move the city toward more sustainable energy use.

**Inspiring Efficiency CHAIRMAN’S Award**—Sara Ward: Retiring Director of the Ohio Department of Development, Office of Energy Efficiency, a founding and active member of the MEEA Board of Directors and stalwart supporter of energy efficiency and renewable energy policy in the Midwest.

Winners will be honored at MEEA’s **Inspiring Efficiency Awards Ceremony**, being held at the **Drake Hotel in Chicago, Illinois**, on **January 10, 2008**. Please visit [www.mwalliance.org/awards](http://www.mwalliance.org/awards) or [www.mwalliance.org/conference](http://www.mwalliance.org/conference) for more information on the Midwest Energy Solutions Conference.

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