



News Release

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Cumberland County awarded \$590,700 to support energy efficiency, conservation

FAYETTEVILLE — Cumberland County has been awarded \$590,700 through The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to support the county's energy efficiency and conservation activities. An initial grant of \$50,000 is being made available now for planning purposes, and the balance of the funds will be distributed at a later date.

The U.S. Department of Energy's Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program was funded for the first time by the Recovery Act. It is providing \$3.2 billion in total funding for the EECBG Program to more than 2,300 cities, counties, states, and Indian tribes nationwide to help them improve their energy efficiency, reduce their energy use and fossil fuel emissions, and create green jobs locally.

Cumberland County will use the initial planning funding to conduct energy audits on 16 county buildings to identify and prioritize energy conservation measures, which may include building retrofits and operational changes. The results of the energy audits will determine how the county plans to spend the additional funding on projects and programs that prioritize energy savings, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create or retain jobs. Subsequent funding will be released once the county's list of energy conservation projects is approved by DOE. The audits should be completed by December 2009.

The county's energy strategy builds upon its Guaranteed Energy Savings Program initiated in 2004. The 16 buildings that will be audited were not included in the 2004 program. The primary objective is to reduce energy consumption by 45 percent, greenhouse emissions by 8,500 tons per year, and save \$750,000 per year as measured against the 2004 baseline, according to Robert Stanger, County Engineer.

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To date, the county has saved about \$2.2 million in energy costs and invested \$4.5 million in 13 facilities on energy savings measures, which included lighting, mechanical equipment, and water conservation retrofits and installation of a METASYS building automation system, Stanger said. The county has also funded expansion of the METASYS building automation system in four other facilities through energy savings.

“In addition to reducing energy costs, these improvements will enhance building occupant comfort; reduce deferred maintenance; decrease the need for capital dollars by funding subsequent projects with dollars saved on reduced energy use; replace banned refrigerants with environmentally friendly coolants; and provide for greenhouse gas emissions reductions,” Stanger said.

“Counties have been actively engaged for many years in promoting energy efficiency and green government practices in their communities,” said Valerie Brown, president of the National Association of Counties. “With the money received through the energy block grant program, counties can now go a step further with their energy goals and help their local economies thrive. It’s a win-win-win by creating new jobs, putting dollar savings back into the community, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu said, “With these grants, communities across the country will be able to make major investments in energy solutions that will strengthen America's economy and create jobs at the local level.”