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Department of Energy Resources Launches Project to Measure Efficiency of Homes in Greater Springfield Area

Federally funded project will employ thermal imaging technology to achieve deep energy efficiency savings in Western Mass homes, and will guide development of a national home energy efficiency and labeling program

****Update:** The Department of Energy Resources (DOER) web site now includes [updated information about the Greater Springfield Energy Efficiency Pilot](#), including links to information from DOER's contractor, Sagewell, Inc., regarding thermal imaging and how it will be used to increase energy efficiency and lower energy bills, as well as how residents can contact Sagewell via email (optout@sagewell.com) or phone (888-586-1726) if they would rather "opt out" by having images of their homes deleted.

[Infrared image of commercial building](#)

BOSTON – March 21, 2011 – Building on nation-leading [three-year energy efficiency plans](#) set to lock in \$6 billion in energy savings for Massachusetts electric and natural gas customers, the Patrick-Murray administration today announced the launch of a federally-funded pilot program that will achieve "next generation" energy efficiency savings of up to 20 percent in more than 2,700 homes across the Greater Springfield area.

As part of the \$2.6 million, three-year grant from the US Department of Energy (DOE), the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) will use approximately \$325,000 for state-of-the-art thermal imaging and analysis to evaluate the energy performance of homes in Springfield, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, Hampden, Wilbraham, Palmer and Belchertown. The Commonwealth's grant is part of a \$28.5 million investment awarded through DOE's State Energy Program to 12 states and territories to support projects that will lower energy bills for American families and businesses, boost job growth, and increase business for companies that deliver energy-saving technologies and services.

"Massachusetts is already leading the nation in per capita investment in energy efficiency," said Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr., whose office includes the DOER. "Through this pilot project and the additional efforts it will inspire, we'll go a step further, helping to create a national model for rating home energy use and creating jobs for local contractors."

Beginning Tuesday, March 22, in Springfield and continuing into April, thermal imaging conducted by DOER's contractor, Sagewell, Inc. of Woburn, will measure the temperature of the outside of buildings, identifying places where additional insulation and air sealing can prevent heat loss and reduce heating fuel use and cost. Thermal images will be taken with equipment mounted inside a hybrid SUV van that will travel streets within the seven-community pilot area. DOER has conducted public outreach to officials in the seven cities and towns, and to over 90 homeowners, contractors, designers, and others who attended the Project Retrofit charrette sponsored by the Western Massachusetts Green consortium on February 26 in Amherst. Results of the analyses will be shared with homeowners who request energy assessments through the MassSave (www.masssave.com) program.

Thermal imaging will take place in selected neighborhoods between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., when temperature differences between inside and outside of buildings are greatest. In addition to receiving cutting edge energy efficiency services, starting in early summer, homes in the Greater Springfield target area that receive energy assessments through the Mass Save program will earn energy ratings similar to MPG ratings for cars and trucks. Owners of upgraded homes will be able to feature those ratings in real estate listings to increase the value of their homes when it's time to sell.

Participating homeowners will also have access to an online system providing "one-stop shopping" for energy efficiency upgrades, including recommended efficiency measures, information about contractors who can perform the work, and information about available incentives and financing.

The DOER competed with states around the country for the U.S. DOE grant, which will be implemented in partnership with three utilities (National Grid, Western Massachusetts Electric Company and Bay State Gas Company). Results of the Massachusetts program will inform similar efforts in Washington, Virginia, and Alabama, which collectively received approximately \$8.5 million from the DOE.

In Massachusetts, the DOE grant will leverage private sector funding to support a three-year program designed to achieve significant energy savings through energy modeling and benchmarking, consumer outreach, contractor management, policy development and innovative financing. The objective is to create a sustainable transformation in the market for home energy improvements.

"This pilot builds on momentum that has already resulted in doubling employment in the Massachusetts energy efficiency sector since Governor Patrick took office in 2007," DOER Commissioner Mark Sylvia said. "Once fully implemented, it is anticipated the project will yield energy savings for participating homes of up to 20 percent."

"Home energy costs are a tremendous concern for many in Western Massachusetts. This pilot program will make a real difference for thousands of families in our communities," said Sen. Gale D. Candaras.

"This project is a great asset to the Western Massachusetts towns participating in the program and will set the standard for greater energy efficiency throughout the state and the country," said Sen. Stephen M. Brewer. "When it comes to fuel costs, every penny counts. The data collected by this technology will put money back into our local economies by creating jobs and saving citizens on the cost of controlling the temperature in their homes."

"Energy conservation provides the most cost-effective and immediate savings for homeowners struggling with increasingly high energy costs, along with creating a more comfortable living environment and enhancing property values. I am proud that Massachusetts is a national leader in increasing our energy efficiency, and pleased that so many residents in our area will benefit from this innovative program," said Rep. Stephen Kulik

"This pilot program will augment the state's efforts in promoting efficient home energy use. Achieving improved energy efficiency is not only good for the environment, but also benefits consumers by reducing their energy costs. I applaud the Governor and Secretary Sullivan for making programs like this available to Springfield residents," said Rep. Cheryl Coakley-Rivera

"The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, under the leadership of Commissioner Sylvia is to be applauded for its work in insuring the reality of an energy efficiency project for the greater Springfield area, technologies realized from the project will advance energy efficiency for all of Massachusetts; I commend Secretary Sullivan for his leadership," said Rep. Benjamin Swan.

"This project is good for the community on so many levels, it uses technology to help save real people real money by identifying energy efficiencies, and creates new jobs in the process. I am thankful for the work done by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources in qualifying us for this program and know that Western Massachusetts will lead the way in developing a national model in energy efficiency," said Rep. Mike Finn.

"I'm always pleased to learn about improvements in energy efficiency here in the Commonwealth", said Rep. Todd M. Smola. "I hope the environmental and financial benefits of this project will serve as a benchmark for the implementation of energy efficient programs in other areas of the state and country."

"This is a great opportunity for the Commonwealth and more importantly for the resident that are able to advantage of this program. In a time when energy efficiency is more important than ever we are extremely fortunate to be able to receive this grant and to offer the benefits to our local residents," said Rep. Brian Ashe.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the Commonwealth's pacesetter energy efficiency efforts.