

# The BetterBuildings View

How energy efficiency is improving lives, communities, and the economy

From the U.S. Department of Energy BetterBuildings Program



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"Block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, we will make our communities more energy efficient and help families save money. At the same time, we'll create thousands of jobs and strengthen our economy."

—Dr. Steven Chu, Secretary,  
U.S. Department of Energy

## Welcome to The BetterBuildings View!

The BetterBuildings View is your official source of news for BetterBuildings, a national energy efficiency program supported by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). BetterBuildings is more than just a program; it's a smart way of thinking about improving your home or commercial building. It allows you, your family, or your company to be more comfortable and energy efficient. BetterBuildings is supporting job growth and saving consumers money through energy efficiency evaluations and improvements to homes and businesses in communities all across the United States.

The BetterBuildings View helps you stay up to date with:

- Profiles of smart, energy-efficient residents, business owners, and energy professionals
- Results and achievements from DOE and local BetterBuildings programs
- Highlights of how BetterBuildings is making news
- Tips to increase your energy efficiency even further

## Success Story: Energy Coach Helps Maryland Family

When BetterBuildings community University Park, Maryland, launched its STEP-UP! program in January 2011, resident Roberta Kisker had had enough of her drafty home. With the help of a simple energy evaluation and an energy coach, she was able to make the smart choice to upgrade her home's insulation and stop air leakage, which immediately improved the comfort of the home.

In fact, the morning after the energy efficiency improvements were completed, Kisker's son Isaac told her, "Mom, I don't need these extra blankets anymore!" [Learn more](#) about how the Kiskers used rebates from STEP-UP! and other programs to nearly



Isaac Kisker. Photo courtesy of the Kisker family.

halve the cost of their energy improvements.

## Progress Around the Country: More Than 75 Percent of Partner Programs Have Launched!

DOE's BetterBuildings program hit the ground running last year and since September 2010, 32 communities have launched local programs. The ultimate goal remains the same: make energy efficiency more accessible to homes and businesses from coast to coast. Nearly 2,000 building upgrades were performed by the end of 2010, a great start to reaching the program's near-term goal of improving 25,000 buildings before the end of 2011. Partners will report this month on how many thousands of upgrades have been completed so far in 2011. Details will be available in the next edition of The BetterBuildings View. With some grants being awarded in late 2010, the progress so far is a true testament to the speed and scale at which the program has operated in less than a full year of existence.

### Bedford Gets Energized

Energize Bedford, a BetterBuildings program partner in Bedford, New York, signed up 200 new members at its Environmental Action Day event on January 29. Martha Stewart (a Bedford native) [blogged about her experience](#)—a natural fit, considering she has made a career out of showing how little changes in a home can add up to a big difference, [as DOE's EnergyBlog pointed out](#). Energize Bedford will help upwards of 1,500 homeowners with their energy efficiency improvements through 2013, supporting its goal of reducing county greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 20 percent over the next 10 years. [Learn more about Energize Bedford](#).

### Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Program Improves Older Homes

"Worthwhile Investments Save Energy," or WISE, is a residential energy saving program in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, designed to improve older homes, which often suffer from draftiness and poor insulation. Such energy related problems reduce occupant comfort and raise utility bills. WISE, funded in part by \$150,000 in BetterBuildings seed money, provides residents with \$50 evaluations and up to \$5,000 in incentives for energy upgrades if energy efficiency improvements of at least 15 percent are achieved. [Learn more about how WISE is helping Chapel Hill residents save money and be more comfortable in their homes](#).

### Austin's "Best Offer Ever" Leads to 10 Times as Many Upgrades

BetterBuildings program partner Austin Energy used \$540,000 in BetterBuildings seed funding to create a "Best Offer Ever" energy upgrade promotion. For a three month period, the promotion permitted participants to receive both a rebate and low interest rate financing, instead of having to choose one or the other. By adding about \$1,200 in additional incentives to Austin Energy's typical offer, this promotion helped lead to more than 450 upgrades by 40 contractors, approximately 10 times the amount of upgrades than would be typical for Austin Energy. [Learn more about Austin Energy's program](#).

Making energy efficiency upgrades at home is not only a smart way to save resources, it can also help improve your family's health. Sealing holes and cracks reduces drafts, dust, moisture, and pollen. A well sealed home reduces the indoor pollutants that can cause asthma.

## Colorado EnergySmart Program Makes Headlines

A homeowner in Boulder County was concerned that her house "leaks like a sieve," wasting energy and draining her checkbook. She looked to the Boulder County EnergySmart program for help. And she wasn't alone. The Boulder County program started accepting applicants in January and since then has received an estimated 850 sign-ups from residents. It's no wonder EnergySmart was recently featured on the local news site The Daily Camera. [Find out how EnergySmart plans to reach its goal of upgrading 10,000 buildings by 2013.](#)

## Stay Tuned...

Look forward to the second issue of The BetterBuildings View coming in June. Forward this email to your friends or encourage them to sign up to receive each issue by sending their e-mail address to [BetterBuildings support](#).

Have something you'd like to contribute to The BetterBuildings View? Send an email to [BetterBuildings support](#) to submit your idea.

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