



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

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Energy Empowers



from a clean energy economy

Energy Empowers is a user-friendly, searchable news service. Across the country, civic, business and NGO leaders, and media are excited by this new online resource. If you want to know what is new in the clean energy space at the state or national level, then Energy Empowers is the newswire for you.

It is our mission to put names and faces to the people who work on energy efficiency in the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors and renewable projects, including solar, wind and water, biomass, geothermal, and hydrogen and fuel cells, supported by the Department of Energy and beyond.

Visit <http://eereblogs.energy.gov/energyempowers/> to read about the businesses and communities that are changing people's lives, stimulating the economy, and moving us closer to a sustainable future.

Multimedia

In our collection of videos, you will witness first-hand stories of individuals and organizations that have taken positive steps toward a future of renewed prosperity.

By pushing the limits of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies and supporting some of America's most innovative businesses, we are saving American jobs and continuing to build a clean-energy economy that will improve the lives and reward the ingenuity of the American people.



Powering Up for Recovery in Michigan
Elizabeth Rolinski can't wait to reopen the factory she was once forced to shutter. When the Department of Energy awarded Johnson Controls Inc. a \$300 million grant to manufacture high-performance batteries for electric cars, it helped attract the company to reinvest in American workers in this all-American town.

[Watch the Video](#)



Training for Success in Las Cruces
The Community Action Agency of Southern New Mexico (CAASN) is one of many organizations working to weatherize low-income households across the country. Here is the story of how David Sierra is teaching Larry Martinez a trade that will provide a pathway to a long-term career and immediate income to support his family.

[Watch the Slideshow](#)

Initiative guides Hawaii to the path of energy independence

With 95 percent of its energy coming from oil, Hawaii is the most state in the nation. The Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative is an effort to diversify the state's energy portfolio and meet the state's goal of generating 75 percent of its power with clean energy by 2030.



Illinois company implementing:



J.F. Electric will soon install its own solar modules solar panels, saving money and greening a commercial space too. (Photo courtesy of J.F. Electric)

J.F. Family Limited Partnership has been awarded \$191,000 through the federal use of solar energy at its Lakeland Parkway property in Illinois is the company headquarters for J.F. Electric Inc. The funding will be used to install solar photovoltaic system on the building's roof, creating electricity a

Green academy helps researchers enter the marketplace

Before wading into the green energy sector, there are crucial things every budding entrepreneur should know. Think like an investor, know your customer, and prove your research is going to solve a problem.



To the business-savvy the advice may seem obvious. But for the academics-minded attending the Green Technology Entrepreneurship Academy, these nuggets are priceless.

We give scientists the language of commercialization, says Andrew Hargadon, a founder of the academy and faculty director at the Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of California, Irvine. (Photo: Matt Hume/Associated Press)

Rebate program helping Alaskan homeowners

The Alaska state legislature's plan to give all homeowners an incentive to weatherize their homes is a hit.

In 2008, the legislature relaunched the once-dormant Home Energy Rebate Program, which reimburses homeowners up to \$10,000 for every dollar spent making energy-efficient upgrades.



Jordan Stewart and his family enjoy the newly weatherized home with his family. (Photo courtesy: State-owned Alaska Housing Finance Corporation manages the rebate program.)

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Share your stories

More than ever before, we want to hear about your great work in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and the Recovery Act. How has your life been touched? Do you have a story to tell?

If so, we want to hear it. Visit <https://www1.eere.energy.gov/pnp/stories/stories.aspx>

Legendary W.Va. senior citizen stays warm, saves money after receiving new furnace



Beulah Sisk has been an icon in the Princeton, W.Va., community for decades | Photo courtesy CASEWV

For the last 56 years, Beulah Sisk has lived in the same house in Princeton, W.Va. Beulah, who worked for 25 years at Lloyd's Pastry Shop, is well known in Princeton. People still see her on the streets today and recognize her as an icon in the community.

After a wind storm damaged Beulah's home last year, it came as no surprise when a senior center employee, concerned for Beulah's safety, told her about the weatherization assistance program.

"A tree fell on my house and damaged a lot of things, including my furnace," Beulah says. "I tried to have it repaired, but it still wasn't working exactly right for the house and the weatherization people put a new furnace in."

After being approved for the program run by Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia, Beulah received not only a new furnace, but also a new hot water heater and insulation in her home, along with new smoke detectors. As a senior living on a fixed income, she said the program was a blessing for her, and she enjoys being able to invite friends and family over to visit now that her living conditions are in good order.

"I was paying around \$100 each month on my gas heating bill. But I got a letter for this month that says I don't need to pay anything — it looks like I still had a credit with them because I've used less," Beulah says. "My bills are down and the house is a lot warmer."

W.V. mom sees benefits of weatherization

Not only is Rachael McCarty working full-time and going to college, but also she's a full-time single mom of two small children. After moving to Bluefield, W.Va., from California a few years ago, Rachel bought her first home, a property that needed some work.

"It's a very, very old house, and it didn't really have any insulation," she says.

Last year, Rachael was approved for the weatherization assistance program from Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia. The agency installed a new furnace and insulation, along with a new hot water heater and weather stripping for the doors. She says the house was much easier to heat this past winter because of those improvements.



Rachael McCarty didn't have the upfront money to weatherize her home, but CASEWV did it for her, and now she's saving money on her energy bills.

"Life is now very good," Rachael says. "My children are in a nice, warm home, thanks to all the work that CASEWV weatherization did."

At age 22, Rachael now has her future ahead of her with a safe home in which she can raise her children. Her house also stands out in Bluefield from the rest. The inspiring young woman has painted her house yellow, with purple trim, and it's also a more energy-efficient home now than those that haven't been weatherized.

"It probably cut my energy bills in half," she says.

Rachael was impressed with the weatherization program and the professionalism of the workers who made the improvements at her home.

"I wouldn't have been able to afford to do the work myself, so I think it's a wonderful program," she says.

West Virginian no longer worried about family's safety

When the mountain winters hit for the last 12 years, Michael Shepard and his family had only a wood stove in their house for heat, plus a few kerosene heaters when the stove didn't do the trick.

Michael's diagnosis as a diabetic, coupled with a shoulder injury, left him disabled, resulting in his early retirement. Relying on a wood stove with a serious shoulder injury meant getting heat in Michael's Bluefield, W.Va., home was a struggle.

"It was cold, just using wood heat, and my wife had to carry it in for me," he says.

After applying for and receiving weatherization assistance from Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia last year, though, his lifestyle at home has changed. The agency updated old electrical wiring in Michael's home, installed a new hot water tank, weather strips, insulation in previously uninsulated walls and the attic, and, perhaps most importantly, an electric furnace.

Michael worried before about keeping his family safe and warm during freezing temperatures. Now, his 12-year-old daughter is comfortable when doing her homework, and Michael doesn't have to wake up three times in the middle of the night to try to keep a fire going.

"The comfort level is great, and comparing my electric bill with what I would've spent on wood, I'm saving money," he says. "If anyone hasn't had their home weatherized yet, they should've done it a long time ago."



Michael Shepard was paying a lot of money for firewood to heat his home until CASEWV sent a weatherization team that installed an electric furnace and insulated the Bluefield, W.Va., house. | Photo courtesy CASEWV

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