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Focus on Energy Renewable Energy Program Promotes Energy Independence

- Program helped state residents and businesses install 184 renewable energy systems in the last year -

MADISON, Wis. (June 5, 2007) – In the last year, Focus on Energy’s Renewable Energy Program has helped 184 Wisconsin businesses and homeowners become more energy independent. By providing technical and financial assistance toward the installation of renewable energy systems, Focus on Energy allowed them to harness energy from the sun, the wind and organic materials. Together, these systems will generate the equivalent of the electricity consumed by 889 average Wisconsin homes and the natural gas used by 729 average Wisconsin homes.

Focus on Energy’s Renewable Energy Program strives to make renewable energy a simple option in Wisconsin by encouraging Wisconsin’s residents and businesses to investigate and take advantage of renewable energy sources. The program educates residents and business owners about renewable energy choices, provides training and financing, promotes technical assistance and supports the installation of renewable energy technologies across Wisconsin.

"The renewable energy industry is booming — and as technology continues to improve and costs come down, a growing number of Wisconsin residents and businesses are using renewable energy systems to reduce their utility bills and keep our air and water cleaner for future generations," said Don Wichert, program director for Focus on Energy’s Renewable Energy Program. "With a network of experts across Wisconsin and a variety of programs to work with, Focus on Energy can help anyone plan, finance and install renewable energy systems."

Renewable energy also helps keep Wisconsin’s air and water clean for future generations. The 184 projects supported by Focus on Energy will prevent the burning of 4,426 tons of coal per year to generate electricity. As a result, they will prevent 14,775 tons of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere per year.

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Success Stories

As energy costs are on the rise, Wisconsin residents are taking advantage of the opportunity to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels and reduce pollution. The following Wisconsin residents and businesses, with the help of Focus on Energy, have installed a renewable energy system that has helped them become more energy independent:

The Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee, a neighborhood based nonprofit community center, recently completed the installation of a 44.4 kilowatt (kW) grid-connected solar electric system. The completion of Wisconsin's largest solar electric system was due in part to technical assistance and a \$64,428 Cash-Back Reward from Focus on Energy. The system's 256 solar panels are expected to generate 55,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity each year – enough to prevent more than 53 tons of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere each year. In addition, the system is expected to meet 40 percent of the Urban Ecology Center's electrical needs.

Green Valley Dairy in Krakow, Wis. boasts 2,500 head of cattle, according to the farm's co-owner Guy Selsmeyer, and that requires special attention to manure management. "Before we installed the anaerobic digester, we were handling manure as a waste product when what we should have been doing is handling it as a value-added product," said Selsmeyer.

Green Valley Dairy is using two anaerobic digesters to generate approximately 4 million kWh of electricity a year, enough to power about 400 average Wisconsin homes every year. The farm sells 100 percent of the electricity generated to the utility company, and then buys some of it back at a special rate. The project's \$2.2 million cost was offset by a \$45,000 grant from Focus on Energy, and has an expected payback period of approximately six years to seven years.

The Dr. Wesley Scott Senior Living Community in Milwaukee recently underwent a redevelopment. Focus on Energy worked with developer Gorman & Company and the Milwaukee Urban League to incorporate renewable energy into the new Metcalfe Park Neighborhood senior living facility. The Dr. Wesley Scott Senior Living Community couples historic renovation with new construction to provide 80 senior apartments, all of which benefit from a solar domestic hot water and a solar electric system.

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The installation of the 11.65 kW solar electric system and the 14-panel solar domestic hot water system will cut the facility's natural gas consumption by 17 percent and produce an estimated 14,475 kWh per year, shielding it from increases in energy costs and helping the center gain energy independence. The system will also offset 23.3 tons of carbon per year. The completion of renewable energy systems is due in part to technical assistance and a \$45,000 Cash-Back Reward from Focus on Energy.

To find more information about technical and financial assistance available through Focus on Energy's Renewable Energy Program, visit fouconenergy.com or call (800) 762-7077.

About the Focus on Energy Renewable Energy Program

Focus on Energy works with eligible Wisconsin residents and businesses to install cost effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Focus on Energy's Renewable Energy Program seeks to raise awareness, provide training and financing, enhance marketing, promote technical assistance and support the installation of renewable energy technologies across Wisconsin. For more information call (800) 762-7077 or visit focusonenergy.com.

About Focus on Energy

Focus on Energy works with eligible Wisconsin residents and businesses to install cost effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Focus information, resources and financial incentives help to implement projects that otherwise would not get completed, or to complete projects sooner than scheduled. Its efforts help Wisconsin residents and businesses manage rising energy costs, promote in-state economic development, protect our environment and control the state's growing demand for electricity and natural gas. For more information call (800) 762-7077 or visit focusonenergy.com.

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