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Increased Incentives Will Help Businesses Save Money

-Focus on Energy offers higher incentive levels to help businesses implement efficiency projects-

MADISON, Wis. (July 13, 2007) – Since its inception in 2001, Focus on Energy’s Business Programs have helped Wisconsin businesses save more than \$85 million in annual energy costs by providing expert advice, technical project support and financial assistance to businesses wanting to cut energy costs by reducing energy use. The state’s energy efficiency and renewable energy initiative entered into its new year on July 1, 2007 and with it came increased financial incentives for businesses looking to take advantage of the environmental and economic benefits the implementation of energy efficient projects offers.

Reducing energy use is a way many businesses are lowering their operating costs and improving their bottom lines. For some businesses, simply upgrading to high efficiency lighting is enough to make an impact on their utility bills, but for others, reducing energy use means new equipment is needed as replacement for existing, less efficient options or to make processes more mechanical and less labor-intensive. Installing new technologies can be very costly and these costs prove to be prohibitive for many companies. With the help of financial incentives available through Focus, these upfront costs may no longer be roadblocks, allowing more companies to have the opportunity to reap the long-term benefits of energy efficiency.

“Once businesses understand the benefits of energy efficiency, many want to take action; however, even the best intentions fail to materialize in the face of high up-front costs,” said Kevin DeMaster, program director for Focus’ Business Programs. “By providing numerous opportunities for businesses to receive financial assistance, we are helping to implement projects that otherwise might not get completed.”

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Now that the new incentive levels have gone into effect, business customers who install qualifying energy efficiency projects will discover that most incentives have increased 10 percent to 40 percent over the levels provided between July 2006 through the end of June 2007. Focus offers many different types of incentives including prescriptive incentives, which are a set dollar amount for specific energy efficiency projects such as lighting or heating, ventilation and air conditioning. Custom incentives are tailored for unique, non-standard projects and can be used as reimbursement up to a maximum of \$250,000 per project or \$500,000 per customer. Focus also offers service buydowns, which are incentives for common operations and maintenance actions.

“I think businesses are often surprised at how easy it is to receive financial assistance with energy efficiency projects from Focus on Energy,” said DeMaster. “Something as simple as a phone call can change the future of a business.”

With Focus’ new year also comes new opportunities for businesses in the realm of new construction. Focus on Energy’s New Construction Program has been created to help businesses with technical assistance, information and financial incentives as they embark on construction of new buildings or renovations of existing facilities. Depending on the type of project, businesses can earn prescriptive and custom incentives for installing energy efficient equipment instead of less efficient options, or Focus can get involved in the planning stages of a new building to help with technical review, energy modeling and energy efficiency advice.

Success Stories

Cascades Tissue Group - Wisconsin, an Eau Claire-based business, made a number of energy efficiency improvements, with the help of Focus on Energy, saving more than \$187,000 in energy costs per year. A condensing stack heat exchanger was added to the main steam boiler to capture most of the energy escaping up the chimney. Focus on Energy provided technical assistance and a \$40,000 financial incentive to help offset the capital investment.

Senior living community, Oak Park Place, which is based in Madison, Wis., received more than \$30,000 in financial incentives from Focus on Energy to help offset the costs of implementing a central hot water system, water loop heat pumps, energy efficient lighting, occupancy sensors and light emitting diode exit signs in their new building. Together these energy efficient technologies will save Oak Park Place an estimated \$35,000 annually.

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The Madison Metropolitan School District received financial incentives totaling more than \$200,000 from Focus on Energy for a number of projects aimed at lowering energy consumption throughout the district, including installation of energy efficient lighting, occupancy sensors and PC network controls. Since first partnering with Focus on Energy in 2001, the district has saved more than \$4.9 million in energy costs.

Tropical Gardens, a greenhouse based in Mosinee, Wis., received an energy audit from Focus on Energy. The free energy assessment identified a number of opportunities for energy saving measures throughout the 70,000 square foot space, including the recommendation to install a thermal energy curtain. Thanks to expert advice and \$3,500 in financial incentives from Focus on Energy, Tropical Gardens installed a thermal energy curtain, which saved nearly \$11,000 in energy costs the first year. The payback period for this installation was less than two years.

More information is available on the Focus on Energy Web site, focusonenergy.com. Businesses can also call Focus on Energy at (800) 762-7077 for help with developing an energy management plan.

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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