



Giving Hope Today



## *Media Release*

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**For Immediate Release**

**December 3, 2010**

### **SaskEnergy Home Energy Efficiency Project exceeds five-year goal**

Today at The Salvation Army Beaver Creek Camp, SaskEnergy, The Salvation Army and SIAST announced that the SaskEnergy Home Energy Efficiency Project (HEEP) has surpassed its five-year goal to reach 2,500 Saskatchewan families with energy efficient upgrades. The three organizations, together with business and community partners, and hundreds of volunteers worked together to help 2,615 families lower their energy costs.

“The success of the SaskEnergy Home Energy Efficiency Project was due to the volunteers from cities, towns, farms and First Nations, who pitched in to help their neighbours and make their communities stronger,” Justice Minister Don Morgan said, on behalf of Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy, Dustin Duncan. “HEEP provided the opportunity for SaskEnergy to talk about ways all homeowners could reduce their energy consumption. Customers are paying attention to the messages in the many programs offered by SaskEnergy, as over the past five years average annual natural gas use per customer in Saskatchewan has declined by almost 20 per cent.”

SaskEnergy has seen energy use per customer decline from 130 Gigajoules (GJs) annually in 2005, to 107GJs in 2010, partially as a result of customers installing more efficient natural gas appliances, renovating their homes to make them more efficient and managing their energy consumption.

“The SaskEnergy Home Energy Efficiency Project showed all homeowners that smaller, low-cost measures, like installing a programmable thermostat, can make a big difference on their energy bills, as every degree Celsius you turn down the thermostat, reduces energy costs by 2 per cent annually,” Duncan said.

HEEP was established in 2005 to provide low-income homeowners with more than \$200 worth of home improvements including: installing programmable thermostats; preparing windows and doors for winter; replacing furnace filters; replacing standard light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs; and installing water-saving showerheads and toilet tank inserts. The home improvements allow families to save on energy and water consumption, some saving as much as \$100 annually on their utility bills.

Today’s celebration included 27 grade 8 students from Westmount School’s Nikanetan (Let's Lead) program taking part in making some of the energy efficient retrofits to the Camp. These students join the previous 2821 volunteers who have helped in the success of HEEP throughout these 5 years.

“The Salvation Army has really appreciated the partnership with SaskEnergy in the HEEP program. Many families in our areas have benefited from this. We are delighted that the Beaver Creek Camp will be benefiting from these gifts this year. One of the goals of our camp is to be environmentally responsible. We appreciate this wonderful assistance to do this,” said Captain Corinne Cameron, The Salvation Army.

“The work undertaken through this project began as part of a SIAST applied research project,” said Dr. Robert (Bob) McCulloch, President and CEO of SIAST. “It turned into so much more -- it started a very real and positive move in support of sustainable communities. I can’t thank our partners enough. Their support has enabled our staff and student volunteers to contribute their time and expertise year after year to make a difference in their communities.”

The SaskEnergy Home Energy Efficiency Project – Rural Community Initiative is in its second year. To date eight communities have participated in HEEP through this initiative, and in addition to hosting a project day, each community receives a \$5,000 grant from SaskEnergy to put toward a community improvement project which benefits the entire community. The projects were:

- A railway station conversion to a community culture/heritage center in the Village of Hazlet
- A boiler system upgrade at Villa Marie Assisted Living in the Town of Macklin
- A heating system replacement at the community centre in the Village of Quill Lake
- An energy efficient LED lighting upgrade for the Winter Lights Festival in the Town of Canora
- Upgrades to the community hall in the Town of Grenfell
- Improvements at the local senior citizens drop-in centre in the Town of Yellow Grass
- Improvements at the local museum in the Town of Shellbrook
- Replacing the floor in the hockey rink in the Town of Wilkie

Now after 43 project days and 57 participating communities, SaskEnergy will sit down with its many community partners in the coming months to consider options for continuing its community-based energy efficiency programming in 2011.

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