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MEDIA ADVISORY

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With Winter Coming and Energy Costs Rising, Grand Rapids Homeowners Can Tap A New Initiative to Make Major Energy Improvements and Save Money

- What:** A new energy-efficiency and home weatherization program called BetterBuildings for Michigan. The program is funded by the federal stimulus initiative and enables homeowners to make major home energy improvements for very little cost. Specifically, the program provides a home energy assessment and **up to \$6,500** for insulation, air sealing, new appliances and other home energy improvements. The program also offers access to no-interest loans to make additional upgrades.
- Who:** The program is administered locally through a partnership of the West Michigan Environmental Action Council, the City of Grand Rapids, the state Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth as well as several certified energy contractors. **Program leaders, energy professionals and participating home owners are available for interview.**
- Why:** Household incomes remain stagnant. Americans are spending an increasing percentage of their disposable income on household energy costs. And Michigan is home to some of the draftiest and most energy wasteful homes in the Midwest, according to a recent survey conducted by the independent Energy Information Agency. The research revealed **61 percent of Michigan homeowners indicate their home is drafty some, most or all of the time** compared to 52 percent of Midwest residents. The research also revealed Michigan residents are more likely to own older, less efficient refrigerators and water heaters and less likely to own Energy Star appliances.
- Where:** The program currently is active in the City of Grand Rapids' Oakdale and Riverside Park neighborhoods and will move to additional residential areas as the program expands its reach. **The three-year goal is to make 2,500 Grand Rapids' homes more energy efficient.**