



Office of the Mayor

Hon. Stephanie A. Miner, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 28, 2013

CONTACT: Alexander Marion

Press Secretary (315) 448-8044

MAYOR MINER LAUNCHES 2013 ENERGY CHALLENGE PROGRAM

*Neighborhood Organizations Compete To Win \$5000 Towards
Neighborhood Sustainability Project*

*Miner: Program Presents Opportunity for Citizens to Set an
Example for their Neighbors*

SYRACUSE, NY – Mayor Stephanie Miner has announced the launch of the 2013 [Central New York Energy Challenge](#) program. The Challenge welcomes neighborhood associations and community organizations to form teams and compete to receive a \$5000 grant through the [Gifford Foundation](#) to put toward a neighborhood sustainability project.

“This program presents an opportunity for citizens in our community to learn about energy conservation measures, to save money and to take steps to lower their environmental impact in a way that builds community and sets an example for their neighbors,” said Mayor Stephanie A. Miner. “Syracuse has a unique perspective and passion for the environment. I challenge our citizens to bring that passion into their neighborhoods and work collaboratively around.”

For the Energy Challenge, organizations will engage their membership to form teams of 5-8 households who work together through a 5-unit curriculum over a period of 6 weeks to learn about energy use and take energy saving actions within the home. The typical household in Central New York wastes about 30 percent of its energy consumption. The Challenge Team program is designed to reduce that energy waste. Participants’ energy consumption will be tracked over a period of 36 months to determine how effective the overall program is for reducing energy consumption.

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An informational public meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 3, 2013 at 5:30 PM in the Atrium of City Hall Commons, 201 East Washington Street. Representatives from the City of Syracuse and partner agencies will be in attendance.

The Energy Challenge Team program was developed in partnership with the [Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board](#) and the [New York State Energy Research and Development Authority](#) (NYSERDA) Office of Energy Efficiency and Exploratory Research based on several findings released in the [US Department of Energy Driving Demand report](#). The DOE study determined providing information and financing tools is not enough to encourage the adoption of positive energy behaviors. Individuals need to develop an understanding of appropriate energy behaviors, make a public commitment to change, and be provided with feedback on their efforts. The Energy Challenge Team program will encourage peer-to-peer conversations and collective action to generate a “buzz” in the community about energy efficiency.

“We are pleased to partner with the City of Syracuse and the Gifford Foundation to provide assistance to households within the City to reduce their energy waste. The Energy Challenge Team model has proven to be effective – with participants reducing household electric consumption by 30 percent,” said Samuel Gordon, Energy Challenge Coordinator with the CNY RPDB, “In one way this is a simple task – because 30 percent of the energy that our homes use is wasted – on the other hand we often need support from our friends and neighbors to make even small changes in our daily routines. The Energy Team model provides just that vehicle.”

“The Gifford Foundation is focused on programs designed to be a resource and foster growth in neighborhoods and strengthen the capacity of community residents. Through this energy challenge we recognize it will motivate the residents of the city of Syracuse to sustain our community in a more sustainable way,” said Sheena Solomon, Director of Neighborhood Initiatives for the Gifford Foundation.

“Many of us simply don’t make the link between our actions and our energy use. The bill comes once a month and we often forget the specific actions that resulted in our usage. By using a team approach, the Syracuse Energy Challenge offers a promising new strategy for reducing energy consumption. By working together, groups of friends, neighbors, or co-workers can really see a difference and help make saving energy easy, fun, interesting, and engaging.” said Professor

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Wesley Schultz, co-author of *Social Marketing to Protect the Environment: What Works* and scientific advisor to [Action Research](#), a consulting team working with the project.

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