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Clean Energy Job Creation in the Local Spotlight

National Clean Energy Tour Comes to Kansas City, Aims to Create Good Green Jobs

Kansas City, MO – National, state and local leaders representing government, business, labor and environmental groups convened today in Kansas City for the “Clean Energy Roadshow.” The Roadshow was created to find ways to spur collaborative public-private investment in the clean energy economy and create quality green jobs for American workers. Kansas City is the Roadshow’s tenth stop in a multi-city, multi-state national tour that is expected to run through 2011.

“Clean energy jobs will be the jobs of the future, whether they are focused on improving energy efficiency of our homes or building wind turbines, solar panels, and electric vehicles,” said Gil Sperling, Senior Advisor at the Department of Energy. **“The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided the down payment for our nation’s transition to a clean energy economy. We need to leverage the combined resources of local and state governments and the private sector through partnerships like we’re building here today to get the best return on these investments.”**

The Clean Energy Roadshow brought together a diverse mix of groups - from clean energy business leaders and innovators, to labor unions, environmental groups and community organizations - to create sustained clean energy markets in Kansas City by catalyzing job creation and economic development. National policymakers had the opportunity to meet with local business leaders and community organizers and share best practices, facilitate clean energy job-creation opportunities from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and identify ways to create a sustainable market demand for clean energy technologies.

U.S. Representative Emanuel Cleaver II highlighted Kansas City’s Green Impact Zone (GIZ) initiative, which concentrates resources like federal and state weatherization funding into a low-income, high-unemployment neighborhood to create jobs and improve energy efficiency, as an example of success. Kansas City has already received \$9 million in stimulus funding from the Department of Energy as part of its Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). Last year, the ARRA invested \$5 billion nationwide to expand WAP, which provides funding for weatherization services for low-income families in communities across the country. WAP provides significant energy savings and improves the health and well being for low-income Americans, whose energy burdens are on average more than four times greater than middle and high income Americans. ARRA was responsible for retrofitting more than 125,000 U.S. homes in 2009.

“We know our nation must change the way we produce and consume energy, we must make our homes more efficient and we must get Americans back to work. The conversation we continue today leverages once-in-a-lifetime federal resources to spur private commitments in remaking our economy for a sustainable future. The American labor movement has done more than any policy or politician to build the middle class. We are climbing out of a recession spurred, in part, by turning our back on the worker and valuing a quick buck over honest labor. It is time again for our economy to be based on hard work and fair pay,” said Congressman Cleaver.

The Roadshow is currently focused in large part on strengthening America’s energy efficiency retrofit industry. Part of the Kansas City Roadshow involved members of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 264 demonstrating elements of the home energy efficiency retrofits that will be done in the Green Impact Zone, including conducting an infrared scan for air leaks and blowing insulation into drafty walls. LIUNA

has designed a breakthrough national program to train local workers to do skilled retrofits of millions of energy inefficient American homes. Quality training programs like LIUNA's are critical to building a skilled workforce that will help create a sustained market for private sector residential retrofit marketplace in cities like Kansas City and around the country. At the Roadshow, participants discussed ways to ramp up both public *and* private investments in America's emerging residential retrofit industry. Some ideas discussed included "pay-as-you-save" models and PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) financing, utility partnerships, bonds and pension fund investments.

"Home weatherization is truly a new, high-road American industry," said LIUNA Local 264 business manager Reginald Thomas. **"With so many out of work, and so many energy inefficient homes in this country, LIUNA is ready to be a part of America's clean energy solution. LIUNA has created a breakthrough training program will put men and women to work in family-supporting jobs, equipping them with skills needed to ensure that weatherization work is done right the first time and tax dollars are spent wisely."**

Retrofitting energy inefficient homes in America will not only create tens of thousands of new jobs, but it will also save families an average of \$440 to \$600 a year on their home energy bills, and in some cases much more. In addition, it will reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve quality of life for homeowners and families and reduce U.S carbon emissions equivalent to taking 615,000 cars off the road in order to help mitigate climate change.

"Unemployment in Kansas City is near 12 percent, and the construction industry has been one of the hardest hit," said Kevin Williams, President of WillCo Development. **"But building a home retrofit industry offers an opportunity to get local people back to work in the Green Impact Zone, across this state, and elsewhere. These are not just green jobs, but good jobs. This kind of future-focused industry is good for my business, good for homeowners, and good for our economy."**

The Roadshow is a collaboration between the Clean Economy Network, Change to Win, the Sierra Club, LIUNA, Blue Green Alliance, Conservation Services Group, the Clean Economy Development Center and a growing base of national partners. The Department of Energy has been an instrumental part of the Roadshow, supporting its goals of increased collaboration and providing improved understanding of the Recovery through Retrofit program.

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