

Application for New Energy Communities

Submitted by the Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative

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Submitting agency:

Garfield County

John Martin, Chairman, Garfield County Board of Commissioners
108 8th Street
Glenwood Springs, Colorado 81601
(970) 945-5004, jmartin@garfield-county.com

Designated contact:

Clean Energy Economy for the Region (CLEER)

Alice Laird, Director
P.O. Box 428
Carbondale, Colorado 81623
(970) 704-9200, ahubbardlaird@sopris.net

Partner entities

Garfield County
Town of Parachute
City of Rifle
Town of Silt
Town of New Castle
City of Glenwood Springs
Town of Carbondale
Garfield County Public Library District

Participating entities

Garfield Re-2 School District
Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association
Holy Cross Energy
Manaus Fund
Rifle Downtown Development Authority
Rifle Lodging Tax Board
Roaring Fork Re-1 School District
Roaring Fork Transportation Authority
Solar Energy International
Sonoran Institute
Sustainability Center of the Rockies
Xcel Energy

Greening Public Facilities

Preliminary figures gathered for the eight partner local governments joining together for this initiative show that the governments own an estimated 51 buildings and pay an estimated \$1.7 million a year in utility bills. This spending estimate is based on past years, so 2008 energy costs are likely higher. Annual savings through energy improvements to these buildings are estimated to be more than \$270,000. At the Roaring Fork School District, where energy spending in 32 buildings covering 1 million square feet is more than \$1 million a year, potential savings are estimated at more than \$200,000 per year.

Program description

This project area has three components: audits and efficiency upgrades for buildings owned by partner local governments; a Energy Star pilot program for the Roaring Fork School District; and best practices guidelines for new construction by partner governments. These components offer significant potential for energy savings through upgrades and smart energy management.

Audits and upgrades: The eight partner local governments are committed to working with GEO to increase energy efficiency in buildings and cut energy costs, including entering into GEO's process for performance contracting. Garfield County and the City of Glenwood Springs have set aside local match to self-fund energy improvements. The program includes energy management training for building managers and building decision makers, and a smart energy campaign with recognition and awards. Annual reports will quantify the progress made and will be widely publicized.

Energy Star pilot: The Initiative proposes a pilot Energy Star program for Roaring Fork Re-1 School District modeled on the results of [Gresham-Barlow School District](#) in Oregon, a two-time Energy Star award winner. Steps include tracking energy use, upgrading buildings and equipment, prompting behavior change by providing building energy data and comparisons to schools elsewhere, creating a sustainability master plan, and encouraging student involvement in school energy management. The lessons and experienced gained through the pilot Energy Star program will be transferred to additional school districts in the region, and other public facilities.

New construction: Six new library facilities are being planned, as are various municipal and county facilities or additions, including a parks maintenance facility in Rifle. The Garfield Initiative intends to ensure that all new public facilities use best practice energy designs and materials. The initiative will create design guidelines for new public facilities and provide technical assistance.

Budget

The DOLA grant request for this project is \$325,000 to pay for technical grade audits for partner governments and, if funding allows, to offset partial costs of equipment upgrades. \$125,000 of this amount will fund the pilot Energy Star program for the Roaring Fork School District, including a one-year EnergyCAP license and training, at \$19,000.

Measurable outcomes

- All facilities held by partner governments undergo technical grade energy audit by end of Q2 2009.
- Efficiency upgrades completed through performance contracting or self-financed upgrades by Q4 2010.
- Roaring Fork School District reports significant reduction in energy use, coupled with effective educational component for building staff, teachers, students and parents.
- Total estimated energy savings of 20 percent at participating facilities by 2011.

Renewable Energy Demonstration Project

This initiative proposes a **Garfield Megawatt Campaign** to install 1 mW of solar photovoltaic systems across the county over the next three years. We will use a variety of techniques to leverage the funding we are requesting from the initiative to either directly fund, develop 3rd party financing, or be a catalyst to spur additional investment in renewables.

The campaign will take advantage of a local armada of experienced solar installers, attractive rebates offered by utility companies, creation of a locally-capitalized clean energy investment fund, and the use of third-party financing if the federal tax credit is extended. This effort will build on the estimated 500 kW already in place in the county and the 2 mW array being installed in Rifle by SunEdison.

Program description

Small arrays: The initiative will arrange financing and coordinate installation of 10 small solar PV systems (10 kW or smaller) on public facilities in each community. In New Castle, solar PV will power lighting for the C Street Path through Mt. Medaris, connecting Castle Valley Ranch to downtown. Residents of every community will see solar arrays on the rooftops of public buildings, motivating property owners to install solar systems on home and business rooftops.

Mid-sized arrays: The initiative will arrange financing and coordinate installation of at least two mid-sized solar PV systems (30 to 50 kW) on highly visible public buildings. Financing mechanisms will most likely include power purchase agreements or performance contracting.

Deerfield Park: A combined efficiency and renewable demonstration at this high-use park in Rifle will create a unique educational opportunity for park visitors. Rifle will install a [Powerhouse Enterprises](#) PowerPod dwelling unit at the park. The green-built, solar-powered dwelling will serve as a walk-through display of sustainable living. An off-grid array will power LED parking lot and ball field lighting.

Financing demonstration: The initiative will convene financial experts and investors to develop and capitalize a Clean Energy Investment Fund. The Manaus Fund has pledged a \$250,000 investment, contingent on the grant award. Aspen Skiing Co. CFO Matt Jones, who developed the finance plan for the 157 kW system in Carbondale, and Alpine Bank VP Dave Scruby have offered their expertise to design and grow the fund. The goal is to develop financing for efficiency and renewable projects, overcoming the up-front cost barrier.

Outreach and proliferation: The Garfield Megawatt Campaign will include aggressive outreach to energy companies and other corporations located or doing business in Garfield County, urging them to invest in significant amounts of renewable energy to reach the 1 mW goal. The Small Commercial and Residential Solar programs will also be part of this campaign.

Budget

The total DOLA grant request is \$990,000, including \$875,000 to assist in financing small arrays and provide technical support for financing and installing mid-size arrays, and \$115,000 to purchase the PowerPod (matched with awarded GEO grant of \$25,000) and install the off-grid array at Deerfield Park.

Measurable outcomes

- Installation of 10 small arrays and at least two mid-size arrays, for up to 200 kW of solar PV.
- Megawatt Campaign spurs private sector investments in renewable energy to reach 1 mW goal.
- Clean Energy Investment Fund offers finance assistance for projects and is a model resource.

LED (light emitting diodes) Communities

One of the largest electric expenses of cities and towns are streetlights and other lighting for public spaces. As this region's communities grow and additional lights are installed, and as conventional street lighting is replaced, it makes sense to look to more energy efficient technologies to reduce operating and maintenance costs in the long-term. Unfortunately, the up-front costs often prohibit small communities with limited resources from upgrading to new technologies. Financial assistance offered through this program can assist the region's communities to demonstrate the efficiency of new lighting technologies, which can cut electric consumption by 50 percent. Based on recommendations from Xcel Energy, this program should include additional technologies besides LED.

Program description

The City of Rifle is interested in pursuing an LED retrofit for 36 pedestrian-level, antique-style street lights along Railroad Avenue and in the downtown core. The city is pursuing a downtown redevelopment plan to improve activity in the city's core. Installing new downcast energy efficient lighting will encourage pedestrian activity and improve the attractiveness of the area. Lights owned by the city and/or the Rifle Downtown Development Authority would be retrofitted with LED bulbs, and the globes would be replaced to maximize the LED retrofit.

Once the bulbs are installed, the City of Rifle will provide comparisons of electrical consumption between previously used bulbs and the retrofits. This information will allow Rifle and the neighboring communities to compare return on investment. If funding allows, additional LED retrofits may be pursued elsewhere in Rifle and in other communities during the grant period.

Budget

Total project cost is \$31,600. The DOLA grant request for this project is as much as \$30,600. City of Rifle will provide \$1,000 in-kind in installation labor. Additional match for materials costs may be forthcoming from the Rifle Downtown Development Authority or the Rifle Lodging tax Board, lowering the amount of DOLA funds needed.

Measurable outcomes

- Installation of LED or similar technology bulbs in 36 street light fixtures by Q3 2009 will cut electrical consumption by about 50 percent for these lights.
- Measure changes in consumption Q4 2009 and Q3 to calculate return on investment for LED retrofits. Neighboring communities may pursue similar retrofits in 2010 or 2011 if ROI is favorable and funding allows.

Small Commercial Audit and Retrofit Program

A demonstration-scale audit and retrofit program, with solid underpinning of information, workshops, technical assistance and awards, will give small commercial enterprises the incentive to pursue energy efficiency upgrades in their buildings. Publicizing their success will lead others to take similar action. Pilot programs will be grown into a county-wide commercial audit retrofit program, with a variety of financing resources for energy improvements.

Program Description

Recruit commercial blocks in downtowns for pilot program: The initiative will work in close cooperation with chambers of commerce and downtown development authority agencies to contact commercial property owners and tenant business owners in downtown areas. Information and workshops will introduce the advantages of audits, retrofit upgrades, and energy tracking.

Audit and retrofit: Using local match, the initiative will subsidize the cost of technical grade energy audits, convey recommendations to owners and tenants, and assemble a package of incentives from utilities, GEO, local match and Clean Energy Investment Fund financing to cover the cost of upgrades. If the setting is appropriate, a renewable energy installation may be added to the upgrade.

Special campaigns: Targeted outreach, workshops and technical assistance on efficiency in lighting and refrigeration would be provided for commercial property owners and tenants outside the pilot area, encouraging owner investment in upgrades with high ROI. Group purchases of equipment

Measurement, tracking and awards: Participating owners and tenants would sign up for an online energy management system to track usage and avoided costs through energy savings. Energy savings gains and direct experiences from the process would be shared with other small business owners. Achievements would be publicized, and participants would be recognized at annual clean energy event and chamber events.

Budget

Budgeted program cost is \$177,500. The request from the DOLA grant is for \$50,000 to pay for program design, marketing, management and outreach. Local match, owner match and clean energy financing will cover client recruitment, audit, upgrade and renewable installation costs.

Measurable outcomes

- Program information made available on local website and in printed materials in Q1 2009.
- Incentives and local match packaged, vendors pre-screened, owners and tenants recruited in Q2 2009.
- Audits conducted, energy tracking set up for at least 30 downtown businesses in Q3 2009.
- Energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy installations made by close of Q4 2009.
- Special lighting and refrigeration efficiency campaign conducted in Q2 and Q3 2009.
- "Saving Energy in Your Business" workshops held in four municipalities Q2 and Q4 2009.
- Energy savings aggregated, annual report issued and awards event held in Q1 2010.
- County-wide program established by Q2 2010.

Residential Solar Electric and Solar Hot Water

Garfield County's 53,000 residents live in an estimated 30,000 households. A focused program emphasizing energy efficiency, smart energy use and on-site renewable energy holds the potential for large energy savings and increased renewable energy generation.

Program description

One-stop shop: The initiative will develop a one-stop website and print materials with a section for households offering information on transportation energy use, home energy efficiency, the costs and benefits of upgrades in lighting, appliances and weatherization, and suggested behavioral changes.

The website and print materials will also offer basic information on how solar PV and solar hot water systems work in a residential setting. Advanced information will explain upfront costs, payback calculations, utility and GEO incentives, tax credits, and financing options offered through the Clean Energy Investment Fund, and provide a list of CoSEIA member installers operating in Garfield County.

Efficiency campaign: The initiative will launch a countywide campaign for households to participate by tracking household and transportation energy use, and emphasize availability of utility and tax incentives for home energy audits and efficiency upgrades. Outreach will include schools, encouraging children to take their knowledge home, and aggressive promotion of Insulate Colorado rebates. [Solar Energy International](#) will offer workshops on residential energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Solar PV and solar thermal top-off: The residential program will be part of the Garfield Megawatt Campaign, recognizing households that install solar PV as Megawatt Stars and those installing solar hot water as Btu Busters. The initiative will help residents understand finance opportunities and offer a limited amount of low-interest financing through the Clean Energy Investment Fund. The initiative will work closely with utilities to maximize visibility and use of utility incentives for renewable installations.

Demonstration project: Energy efficiency upgrades and installation of renewable energy systems would be carried out at several target sites, including a senior housing facility.

Budget

The request from the DOLA grant is for \$40,000 to pay for program design, marketing, management and outreach. Local match, owner match and clean energy financing will cover audit, upgrade and renewable installation costs. This program will make extensive use of utility incentives.

Measurable Outcomes

- One-stop shop website rolled out early in Q2 2009.
- 30 households install solar PV or solar hot water by Q4 2009.
- A demonstration residential audit/retrofit home energy makeover will be completed as funding allows. The Initiative will secure private and utility sponsors for expenses that cannot be covered by GEO or DOLA funds.

Insulate Colorado Program

Insulate Colorado is an under-used program in Garfield County because of insufficient marketing, lack of being connected to a countywide residential program, and because only two of the seven local government jurisdictions participated in 2008. The Garfield initiative plans to offer Insulate Colorado rebates to residents of the county's six municipalities — Parachute, Rifle, Silt, New Castle, Glenwood Springs and Carbondale — and unincorporated Garfield County.

Program description

The Garfield proposal plans to use Insulate Colorado to offer rebates for weatherization of 200 homes per year. The Insulate Colorado program will be part of the Initiative's overall residential efficiency program, and will benefit from the combined outreach and visibility of a countywide energy efficiency campaign.

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An extensive marketing program would be launched for year one, focused on outreach through schools and other networks that can directly reach households, paid advertising and earned media through before-and-after stories and testimonials from beneficiaries. This program could taper off in years two and three, assuming gains in community awareness through branding and word of mouth from year one benefits. Rebates would be issued by the fiscal agent, Garfield County, using GEO guidelines.

Given this program's slow start in 2008, a careful analysis of success rates and lessons learned would be conducted at the end of year one. The governance council and project staff may consider adjustments to enhance program reach and effectiveness in the following years.

Budget

Annual expenditures would \$89,300 in year one and \$85,300 in years two and three, covering rebate payments, marketing and outreach, and accounting services (covered by in-kind local match).

The grant request is \$45,000 from DOLA for a marketing and media campaign and \$94,545 from GEO for rebates over the three-year period. This will be combined with an anticipated total of \$94,545 in local match for rebates.

Measurable outcomes

- The Insulate Colorado rebate offer would prompt at least 200 homeowners per year to contract for weatherization upgrades, for a total of 600 homes weatherized over the three-year life of the program.
- Analysis of the program's real-life accomplishments at the end of year one would shape changes that may be needed to make it more effective.
- Insulate Colorado would be part of a larger marketing campaign aimed at raising consumer awareness of the financial and comfort benefits of home weatherization.

ENERGY STAR New Homes Program

In 2008, a group of regional partners (see chart below) funded an ENERGY STAR New Homes Program with GEO's support. For 2009, the group would expand to include the towns of Parachute, Silt and Snowmass Village, and Garfield County. Creating a larger partnership takes advantage of economies of scale for this educational program.

Program description

Training and education services will focus on builders, developers, building department officials, community development officials, elected officials, Realtors, home buyers and home owners.

Workshops and presentations would include technical training in the latest energy efficient building techniques and materials for building industry professionals, training on Energy Star and HERS for builders and Realtors, and workshops for homeowners on smart energy living and home upgrades. Individualized technical support will focus on helping multi-family affordable housing projects earn Energy Star certification.

Policy work would focus on creating incentives to use HERS as a measure of code compliance, using Energy Star guidelines in adopting above-code programs, and using a common rating system to track the energy performance of new homes.

A media campaign would expand consumer awareness of HERS, build market demand for Energy Star rated homes, and attract high levels of participation in program workshops.

Budget

Annual expenditures for the Garfield County share of this program are budgeted at \$53,800 in 2009, \$46,000 in 2010, and \$46,000 in 2011.

The program would use \$10,000 in DOLA funds, \$52,400 in GEO funds and an anticipated \$52,400 in local match over the three years.

Measurable outcomes

- Host six workshops per year for building industry professionals, three workshops per year for real estate professionals and at least three workshops per year for homeowners and home buyers.
- Establish HERS as a measure of code compliance, use Energy Star guidelines in adopting above-code programs, and establish a common rating system to track the energy performance of new homes in Garfield County jurisdictions.

Greening Government

Governments committed to conserving resources in their operations can lead by example and be catalysts for significant energy improvements in the public and private sectors.

Program description

This project area anticipates involving the county government, all six municipalities, the library district, and the Roaring Fork School District. It is focused on setting energy reduction goals, tracking energy usage, developing strategies for sustainability, and recognizing achievements.

Adopt goals: The Garfield initiative will work with its partner governments to review and consider the adoption of Greening Government goals that meet or exceed those established by Gov. Ritter's executive orders, or confirm that existing goals meet this standard.

Baseline measurement and ongoing tracking: The initiative will conduct baseline energy inventories of partner governments and set up a countywide energy usage tracking system using the state-preferred EnergyCAP software. The initiative will also pursue a baseline inventory for the entire county.

Sustainability management system: Once energy use data is accessible, partner governments will be able to make informed decisions about energy use. The initiative will provide policy templates, best practice examples, education and training to help each government reach sustainability goals. The regional collaboration among neighboring governments will provide an information and support network to boost results.

Campaign and rewards: In concert with the Greening Public Facilities program, the initiative will issue an annual progress report and host an annual event to recognize participation and performance.

Budget

Total budget for this project area is \$206,250 over three years. Purchase of the EnergyCAP annual license for three years plus one-time training fee will be \$86,250 for the eight Garfield partner governments. Estimated cost to develop and implement a sustainability management system is \$120,000. The DOLA grant request for this project area is \$200,000.

Measurable outcomes

- Greening Government goals adopted or confirmed by partner governments.
- Baseline inventories for partner governments completed by Q2 2009; ongoing tracking systems established by Q2 2009.
- Countywide baseline energy inventory completed by Q4 2009.
- Library of policy templates and best practice examples posted on a local website by Q2 2009.
- Sustainability management developed and operating by Q1 2010.
- Annual report issued by Q1 2010, annual event held during Q1 2010 and 2011.

Model Codes

Communities that adopt energy-smart building and zoning codes can significantly shape future energy use and community livability. Garfield County and its six municipalities have already adopted IECC building codes, as required by state law. Some jurisdictions have also already implemented examples of codes that aim for more energy-efficient community design.

Program description

The initiative will work with the county and municipal jurisdictions to advance green building and land use codes and design standards to encourage maximum energy efficiency and livability. The Garfield Initiative's model code program will place an emphasis on green building techniques that go beyond what is currently adopted, and codes that expand transportation options and encourage smart growth.

The Initiative will work in partnership with the Sonoran Institute and Sustainability Center of the Rockies on the following deliverables:

- Gather examples of model codes and standards for green building, smart growth, and livability and make available through the Initiative's web page.
- Provide a menu of best practice transit-friendly land use and design standards to support transit in communities in RFTA service territory, and work for adoption of related codes that fit each setting.
- Provide technical assistance to elected officials and staff in jurisdictions interested in adopting model codes. Provide technical assistance for start-up implementation.
- Develop design guidelines for commercial structures and public buildings not currently covered by green building codes.
- Host at least two workshops per year for elected officials, planners, planning and zoning commission members, developers and residents to learn about model sustainability codes.

Budget

Total budget for this program over two years is \$90,000 The DOLA request is for \$50,000. The Sonoran Institute is providing \$20,000 in-kind support for this component of the initiative.

Measurable Outcomes

- Examples of model codes gathered and posted on initiative website Q1 2009.
- Provide menu of transit-friendly codes and examples by Q1 2009.
- One workshop on model codes held in Q1 2009; second by Q4.
- Design guidelines for commercial and public buildings completed by Q3 2009.
- 3 communities have adopted at least one element from menu of best practices by Q2 2010.
- Follow up technical assistance provided to at least 3 communities throughout 2010.

Sustainability Team / local capacity

A team encompassing multiple skills and expertise is needed to make the proposed programs and services a success. In addition, the team will need to be integrated within an enduring countywide structure to continue providing the technical expertise, services and programs required over the long term to create a New Energy Community and meet state climate protection and energy goals.

In the 1930s, the Soil Conservation Service tackled the dustbowl by creating county-level soil conservation districts, which provided local technical assistance and forged partnerships to tackle the ecological and economic crisis of that era. The energy challenges of today need a similar scale of local institutions to quickly move the country to greater efficiency and energy security.

The Garfield Initiative will be tapping example structures from around the country to make long term measurable results in energy savings, rapid increase in renewables, and offer comprehensive programs that set long term sustainability improvements in action. Some of these examples for building local capacity include [Solar Sonoma County](#), [Redwood Coast Energy Authority](#), and the CORE models in Pitkin County and LaPlata County. These countywide models benefit from economies of scale that individual communities have difficulty achieving on their own.

The Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative has outlined the following steps to create the county-wide structure for implementing the proposed programs and services :

- Governance council: A work group was established to develop this New Energy Communities Proposal. The next step will be to develop an Inter-Governmental Agreement among the partner governments and organizations to establish a governance council. This interim effort will be staffed by the nonprofit organization Clean Energy Economy for the Region (CLEER).
- Sustainability staff and contractors: The Governance Council will hire a team of people with the varied skills and expertise required to ensure success for the programs and services outlined in this application.
- In-kind fiscal management: Garfield County staff will provide fiscal management services for the initiative.

Budget

The request is for the recommended \$200,000 in DOLA funds, which would be applied to this larger concept of a Sustainability Team and accompanying organizational structure. We estimate that the full cost for providing the staffing and organizational structure essential for success over three years will be more than double this amount. Some of these human and organizational resource costs are incorporated into program areas where appropriate, to account for staff and contractor time. The Initiative will need to secure additional funding from other sources on a year-by-year basis.

Other

I. Clean Energy Transportation Options

Creating a more sustainable transportation system is an essential component of a new energy community. In addition to advancing codes that increase transportation choices, this initiative proposes:

- Safe Routes to School program for elementary and middle schools in all three Garfield County school districts. This program encourages biking, walking, carpooling, and taking the bus to school and reaches thousands of households.
- Education, outreach, and marketing to encourage use of clean energy transportation options, delivered through the initiative website, e-newsletter, a Bike to Work Day and other events.
- Promote policies that increase mode share of clean energy transportation options in each community. Design guidelines and standards for encouraging transportation choices.
- Work with local governments and vendors to purchase demonstration clean energy vehicles.

II. Education and training for a new energy economy for children, teens and adults.

The initiative will partner with Solar Energy International to:

- Expand renewable energy training for K-12 teachers through the “Solar in the Schools” program.
- Provide scholarships for county residents to attend SEI’s renewable energy courses.
- Launch a Solar Olympics inventor’s competition for teens and young adults.

III. Clean energy financing

The initiative will develop a Clean Energy Investment Fund as a near-term financing mechanism, and pursue an opt-in clean energy financing district for Garfield County for 2010 and beyond.

Clean Energy Investment Fund: The initiative will convene banking experts and investors to develop and capitalize the fund. It will offer low-interest loans for efficiency and renewable projects.

Clean Energy Finance District: The initiative will work on the policy and legal fronts to develop a robust long-term financing mechanism for private property owners. The initiative will monitor Boulder County’s experience, and would aim for a Garfield County ballot question in November 2009.

Renewable energy finance tools: In Q1 2009, the initiative and SEI will co-host a renewable energy finance workshop. SEI is a GEO Solar Innovation Grant recipient, and expects to use \$10,000 of the grant to fund expansion and adoption of innovative financing tools for renewable energy in Garfield County.

Budget

The request for DOLA funding for these projects is \$60,000. That will be matched by \$40,000 in local cash and \$39,000 in in-kind match.

Program budget

Program area	Local cash match 2009	Local in-kind match 2009	GEO funds	DOLA funds	Utility rebates	Other
Greening public facilities	\$35,000	\$1,160,000	Performance contracting assistance	\$325,000	Utility incentives	
Renewable Energy	\$30,000		GEO funding as available	\$990,000	Utility incentives	\$250,000
LED Communities		\$1,000		\$30,000		
Small Commercial	\$110,000	\$17,500	GEO funding as available	\$50,000	Utility incentives	
Residential Solar	\$110,000		GEO funding as available	\$40,000	Utility incentives	
Insulate Colorado	\$32,000		\$94,545	\$45,000		
Energy Star New Homes	\$19,000		\$52,400	\$10,000		
Greening Government	\$50,000		GEO funding as available	\$200,000		
Model codes	\$20,000	\$20,000		\$50,000		
Sustainability team	\$60,000	\$75,000		\$200,000		
Other	\$40,000	\$39,000		\$60,000		
Total	\$506,000	\$1,312,500	\$146,945	\$2,000,000	Estimated at least \$500,000**	\$250,000

* Local cash match only for 2009

** Holy Cross rebates estimated at \$283,500 for 2009 and 2010; Xcel Energy unable to estimate by zip code but most of county population lives in their territory.