

November 15, 2012

Deadline approaching to qualify for energy efficiency funding

With a cold Wisconsin winter setting in comes a stark reminder that only six months remain to take advantage of the Milwaukee Energy Efficiency (Me²) program and make cost-saving improvements to local buildings.

Utilizing grants from the U.S. Department of Energy, Me² offers home- and business-owners incentives and financing to have buildings evaluated for potential energy savings improvements, and then to carry out the upgrades. The program has facilitated energy savings at hundreds of Milwaukee homes and businesses, created jobs in the community and pumped millions of dollars into the local economy.

At the landmark Wells building, 324 E. Wisconsin Ave., owner Eric Nordeen said upgrades made with the assistance of the Me² program will allow them to save 17 million gallons of water that was being wasted annually by the building's old cooling system. At Too Clean Laundry, 6404 W. Lisbon Ave., owner Everet Kamikawa says Me²-aided improvements have trimmed his utility bills by more than 40 percent.

You can view a short video that tells their and others' stories at smartenergypays.com/about, or at this [YouTube link](#).

For small businesses, Me² can pay for up to 60% of energy saving improvements, up to \$30,000. Large businesses can get rebates covering up to 30% of energy savings improvements, up to \$300,000. And for homeowners, Me² provides help finding a local, participating contractor to do the work, affordable financing for the project and thousands of dollars in rebates based on how much energy use is reduced.

Details are available at smartenergypays.com.

But the May 2013 deadline to qualify for Me² is approaching fast. Milwaukee Environmental Sustainability Manager Erick Shambarger said now is the ideal time to utilize the program.

"Our staff is ready to help even more property owners take advantage of this unique opportunity by guiding them quickly through the application process," Shambarger said. "But with the deadline coming up, we don't want anyone to get left out in the cold, so now is the best time for Me² participants who have been on the fence to get the ball rolling."

Shambarger said the program has also been a tremendous boon for the local economy, generating millions of dollars in energy efficiency investments and putting more than 50 skilled Milwaukeeans back to work in this difficult economic time. All Me² contractors have committed to paying family-supporting wages and hiring local workers.