

Danville Partners with Rental Property Owners to Improve Energy Efficiency

Chatham Star Tribune
Tuesday, October 18, 2011

DANVILLE - The city of Danville has launched a new service to help rental property owners reduce energy costs for tenants.

Through a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, the city will pay up to 50 percent of the cost for specified energy efficiency improvements (total work cost not to exceed \$6,500). Low interest financing will be available to help owners with remaining costs.

The service is available for housing units occupied by income-qualified residents.

"There is a tremendous need in our community for rental housing that is affordable from an energy efficiency standpoint," said Dianne Morris, director of housing and development. "We hope that property owners will see this as an opportunity to increase the affordability and comfort of their rental homes, while maintaining high occupancy rates."

Each rental unit will have its own set of weatherization improvements based upon an energy audit determining which measures would be most cost effective. Energy savings improvements may include, but are not limited to: insulation, air sealing, duct sealing, high efficiency lighting, replacement of inefficient refrigerators, and repair of inefficient heating and air conditioning systems.

In response to a federal funding opportunity announcement issued in April, 2010, the city of Danville proposed a plan to improve the energy efficiency of its rental properties. The plan features a partnership with rental property owners that offers cost sharing and low interest financing to enable them to make money-saving energy efficiency improvements. The city will also provide energy performance labels for homes served under the program, providing a visible measure of energy efficiency comparable to the miles-per-gallon sticker found on a car.

"Our hope is that the labeling approach will increase demand for more energy efficient rental homes within the city," Morris said.

Danville was awarded more than \$1 million for the new service, and has spent the summer training home improvement contractors who have earned the necessary certifications to perform work for the program. With the service now officially launched, more than 100 local rental property owners have expressed interest.

As the weather turns colder, Morris said that now is the time to request this special program.

"We have sufficient funding to help 300 rental properties, and we hope that we can make a real difference in residents' utility bills for the coming heating season."