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## **Howard County Launches Free Energy Audit for Homeowners**

*Site audit shows huge energy savings for well-kept home*

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – Howard County Executive Ken Ulman is pleased to announce the launch of a program to provide 1,669 free energy audits to Howard County residents. The program uses \$659,000 of Howard County's \$2.6 million Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant allocation, which was funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

In 2010, the County published a comprehensive greenhouse gas inventory and climate action plan. The inventory showed that residential electricity and gas for heating comprised over 25% of the County's overall carbon footprint and this program is designed to help residents find ways to reduce their footprints and save money.

"In energy, like so many other areas, information is empowering," said County Executive Ulman. "This program gives us the opportunity to offer homeowners the information they need to make smart energy decisions which will reduce the County's overall carbon footprint, and save homeowners money."

Today's announcement was made at a home in Columbia that underwent a home energy audit just last week. This home was built in 1976, substantially renovated in 2009, is well maintained, and has a new HVAC system. Despite that, the energy audit showed several energy inefficiencies that could be improved in the home for a cost of around \$1800 (examples are: more attic insulation needed, weather stripping the doors, install low-flow aerators.) The audit also showed that if those improvements were completed the homeowner could save \$375 a year on energy. With the substantial rebates available from the State, and the homeowner's energy provider, the homeowner would "earn-back" her investment in less than 2.5 years.

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## **Howard County Launches Free Energy Audit for Homeowners** *(continued)*

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Homeowners can apply for a free audit by going to [www.livegreenhoward.com](http://www.livegreenhoward.com) and filling out an application. Winners will be selected through drawings that select a broad cross section of homes based on location, age, size, building material, and type of home. Selections will be made weekly for the next six months.

The County's Office of Environmental Sustainability will be administering the program and collecting the data from all of the audits. "When we are completed, we will have a significant amount of data from a complete cross-section of homes throughout Howard County," said Joshua Feldmark, Director of the Office of Environmental Sustainability. "With all of this data we will develop best practices and the most effective energy efficient upgrades for every home in Howard County."

Residents who are selected for the program must agree to provide a 12-month history of energy usage for their home, be present at the audit, and complete a survey 6 months after the audit to report efficiency measures they implemented.

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