



Riverside gets grant to save energy, cut emissions

10:00 PM PST on Tuesday, January 26, 2010

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The Press-Enterprise

Riverside wants to shrink its carbon footprint.

Officials plan to spend \$2.85 million in federal grant money over the next three years to launch nine energy-efficiency programs ranging from solar trash compactors to a maintenance vehicle charging station.

The city received the bulk of the money, about \$2.3 million, from the Department of Energy earlier this month and has until December 2012 to spend it.

Residents are most likely to notice solar trash and recycling compactors at public facilities, LED street lights, and reflective signs that will replace lighted street signs at city intersections.

The new trash and recycling bins would need to be emptied less often. A compactor was tested at Fairmount Park this fall, and the city is still choosing about 35 locations for the full program, said Cindie Perry, a principal management analyst for the city.

Spots for LED street lights are also not yet finalized but officials are targeting alleys to improve safety, Perry said. New reflective signs that don't use any energy will replace lighted street name signs at about 300 intersections.

The biggest chunk of the money will go to making foreclosed homes more energy efficient. The city already offers rebates to homeowners who insulate, replace windows and buy energy-saving appliances, but the new program will multiply rebates for people who do more projects, said Mike Bacich, customer relations and marketing manager for Riverside Public Utilities. It also will help make the rebate process easier.

"We are dealing with a lot of investors or homebuyers, and they are going to spend maybe two or three weeks rehabbing a house," he said. "They don't have time to fill out a lot of paperwork, and they're not going to shop around for a lot of these things."

Officials are so excited about the green home rehab program, they plan to continue it after the federal grant runs out, Bacich said. The City Council was expected to vote on the home rehab program Tuesday.

Other grant-funded programs will include updating city plans for the Marketplace and University Avenue areas to reduce transportation emissions and add incentives for green buildings.

A solar-powered charging station for electric golf carts will be installed at the city's water quality control plant. The golf carts now get plugged in to more traditional power sources.

The city also is using some grant money to expand an inventory of greenhouse gases produced in Riverside. In 2007 officials measured the

emissions from city facilities, and now they've added the rest of the community. A report on those results is due to the council in March.

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Energy Efficiency Grant

Riverside this month received most of a \$2.85 million federal grant to shrink the city's carbon footprint through a variety of programs. Here is a breakdown of how the money will be spent.

\$965,348

"Green" rehabilitation on up to 1,200 foreclosed homes

\$450,300

Replace lighted street signs at about 300 intersections with reflective signs

\$308,100

Replace boilers, heating and other equipment at city buildings

\$260,940

Software to automatically shut down idle computers

\$258,070

Update Marketplace and University Avenue plans with green incentives

\$254,050

Retrofit street lamps with LED lights

\$156,900

Photovoltaic charging station for maintenance vehicles

\$153,240

Solar trash and recycling compactors

\$44,650

Citywide assessment of greenhouse gases

Source: City of Riverside