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City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Grants Available to Switch from Heating Oil to Natural Gas

BY: Daniel Fanning, Community Relations Officer - Mayor's Office

Grants Available to Switch from Heating Oil to Natural Gas

[Duluth, MN] Ecolibrium3 has announced a new grant program to help households switch from heating with fuel oil to natural gas. Grants will allow income-eligible households to replace their fuel oil heating systems to high efficiency natural gas units at little to no cost. The pilot fuel conversion program will serve 22-27 households through October 2013. Grant funds will be prioritized to single-family homes located in the At Home target areas of Lincoln Park and West Duluth, focusing on those who are currently natural gas customers but who use fuel oil to heat their homes. Grants will average \$6,000 per household and will cover the replacement cost of fuel oil mechanicals (furnaces, boilers and water heaters) to high efficiency natural gas units.

Ecolibrium3's CEO Jodi Slick states, "The Fuel Conversion Pilot Program will make the winter heating season much more comfortable and affordable for participants. Grants will cover most – if not all – of the cost of a new efficient heating system."

Over the past two years, Ecolibrium3's Duluth Energy Efficiency Program has helped over 600 area residents save energy and reduce their utility bills and reduce their carbon emissions. Participants who switched from heating with oil to natural gas are saving an average of \$1062 each year.

The pilot program is funded by the Community Development Block Grant program. According to the City of Duluth Community Development Director, Keith Hamre, "There are hundreds of natural gas customers in our community who are not heating with affordable natural gas. Ecolibrium3's program will help those who have not been able to afford the cost of replacing their heating systems to switch from oil to natural gas."

The City of Duluth has been recognized as an EPA Climate Showcase Community for Ecolibrium3's Duluth Energy Efficiency Program (DEEP). Through DEEP, Ecolibrium3 helps homeowners of all incomes increase the efficiency of their homes. An Advanced Home Performance Assessment identifies improvements that will save the most energy and money. Following the assessment, Ecolibrium3's staff provides personalized assistance and support to help participants prioritize improvements, find reputable contractors for their job, and identify all applicable tax incentives, rebates and loans available to offset the cost of energy improvements.

Residents with questions or those interested in taking part of this new program can contact Ecolibrium3 at (218) 336-1038, visit www.ecolibrium3.org, or e-mail Jodi Slick at jodi@ecolibrium3.org.

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