



Energy Savings Grants Top List of DDA Sustainability Initiatives

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More than 90 downtown Ann Arbor businesses have received Energy Savings Grants from the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority (DDA) in the first 18 months of the program's existence. The popularity of the program is another clear demonstration of the DDA's commitment to energy conservation and sustainability – even during trying economic times.

The Energy Savings Grants program is just one of several DDA-funded initiatives to help foster a more sustainable downtown. These projects include

- sponsoring the six downtown Zipcars (http://www.a2dda.org/dda_achievements/zipcar_ann_arbor/)
- bike stand and bike hoop (http://www.a2dda.org/dda_achievements/bike_hoop_installations/) installations throughout the DDA District;
- the solar demonstration project at the Farmers Market; street light and holiday light conversion to LED (http://www.a2dda.org/dda_achievements/led_street_lights/)
- and the LEED-like standards being set for the new S. 5th Ave. Underground Garage project, (http://www.a2dda.org/current_projects/s_fifth_ave_parking_structure_project/#Environmental_Considerations) among others.

The DDA Energy Savings Grant program has two phases. Phase I provides approved applicants with free energy audits for buildings or businesses within the DDA District, resulting in a detailed report on the current energy use of the building.

Phase II offers DDA matching dollars for the installation of energy saving improvements identified in the energy audit. These might include such items as more efficient lighting, insulation and air sealing, new heating and cooling equipment. The second phase also includes DDA assistance with the valuable DTE rebate program.

In 2008/09, the first year of the program, 44 businesses were approved to receive a free energy audit. As of September 30, 2009, 34 of the audits had been completed, representing 378,000 sq ft of buildings with more than \$700,000 in annual energy costs. The energy audits identified \$883,000 in recommended energy improvements, with projected savings of \$178,300 per year. The identified improvements would pay for themselves in 3.5 years. Most of these first year audit recipients are moving forward with the installation of energy saving measures, and seven have completed their installations.

New components added to the DDA Energy Savings Grant program this year include a partnership with the City of Ann Arbor Energy Office to make zero interest loans available to participants through a federal grant. In addition, the DDA program has begun providing assistance to applicants to take advantage of utility rebates now available from DTE Energy for energy improvements.

More information on the DDA's Energy Saving Grant program can be found on the DDA website, http://www.a2dda.org/current_projects/downtown_energy_saving_grant_program/

Businesses located outside the downtown interested in pursuing an energy audit should call the City's Energy Office for more information at (734) 794-6430 x43711.

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