



Date:

Thursday, March 25, 2010

Time:

4:20 p.m. – 4:40 p.m.

Presentation:

“Lessons Learned and Best Practices from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block”

Rosemary Wehnes

Associate Representative, Sierra Club (Cool Cities Program)

In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was passed and signed into law. This act included funding for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG.) Entitlement communities in Wisconsin are eligible to receive a total of about 25.4 million dollars to fund projects in their communities. Eligible projects include, for example: building energy audits, energy efficiency retrofits, traffic signal and street lighting, material conservation programs, renewable energy on government buildings, and technical assistance. Each eligible local government also was required to develop an energy efficiency and conservation strategy as part of their application. Many Wisconsin cities and counties were poised to take advantage of this federal funding opportunity. With energy costs escalating, communities were already taking steps to reduce these expenditures. Municipal buildings, traffic and street lighting, and sewage treatment facilities offer tremendous opportunities for cost effective energy efficiency improvements. Based on a review of EECBG applications, most Wisconsin communities have chosen to use federal funds for building retrofits and traffic and street lighting, with the addition of a few renewable energy projects. This presentation highlights projects in a few select cities, challenges of the program and emerging "best practices."

Presenter Biography:

Rosemary Wehnes

Rosemary Wehnes is an associate representative for the environmental group, Sierra Club. Wehnes works for Sierra Club's national conservation program and is currently focused on their "Cool Cities" Campaign, working with local governments to secure reductions in carbon emissions by implementing Best Practices in energy projects and policies.

Wehnes has a Master of Urban Planning Degree from the UW School of Architecture and Urban Planning (SARUP) and opened the first Sierra Club office in the Milwaukee Metro Area. Conservation work has focused on a range of topics, including urban sprawl, transportation, Great Lakes, and climate change.