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**LOW-INCOME FAMILIES TO RECEIVE EXPANDED ENERGY EFFICIENCY SERVICES
*Owens Signs Bill Providing \$19 Million to Reduce Energy Consumption and Costs***

DENVER, CO February 16, 2006 – The Colorado Governor's Office of Energy Management and Conservation (OEMC) will receive \$19 million over four years in funding to provide additional energy efficiency measures that reduce heating consumption for low-income families. Gov. Bill Owens signed HB-1200 on February 3, 2006, which authorizes these funds to be invested in a variety of energy saving strategies targeting existing and new housing.

A portion of these funds will supplement OEMC's Energy Saving Partners (ESP) Program, retro-fitting households with low-cost and cost-effective energy efficiency measures and providing energy education to low-income households. Other measures that ESP may administer for low-income families include heating system and other appliance replacements and cost-effective renewable energy measures.

OEMC will also launch new initiatives with these funds. OEMC will work with developers of low-income housing to exceed local minimum energy codes. Easy-to-install energy saving devices, such as light bulbs and shower heads, will be distributed to certain low-income households statewide. Combined with consumer education, these devices can immediately reduce home energy consumption. OEMC will be soliciting proposals from vendors this spring who can efficiently carry out a wide-scale distribution effort.

"Low-income families pay a larger percentage of their income on utility bills. These new and expanded energy efficiency measures are in addition to the assistance currently available to income-qualified families," said Drew Bolin, director of OEMC. "We are looking forward to implementing these services that reduce their long-term energy consumption and costs."

The legislation states that OEMC must serve as many low-income households throughout the state as possible, achieve the maximum lifetime energy savings per dollar expended, and use competitive bidding procedures to hire contractors.

The OEMC funding for low-income energy efficiency will be \$4 million this year and next, then increasing to \$5 million and \$6 million in the following two years. The money comes from mineral and energy severance taxes paid to the state. The bill will also fund the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) with a total of \$41 million over four years to help low-income families with heating bills during the winter.

To qualify for LEAP and Weatherization, the applicant must be at or below the 185 percent level of the federal poverty index. To apply for assistance, call 1-866-HEAT HELP. To learn more about OEMC, ESP, and the upcoming opportunities from this Bill, visit www.colorado.gov/oemc.

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