

CPS Energy and city of San Antonio use federal funds to save energy, create jobs

CPS Energy and the city of San Antonio marked a milestone Oct. 24 with the Casa Verde SA program, officially weatherizing 3,000 homes. This was more than double the original target, achieved in less time than originally planned, the city said.

The milestone was achieved at the home of Elisa Teveni, a west San Antonio resident who received nearly two dozen weatherization as well as health and safety measures. Improvements to Teveni's 86-year old home included wall, floor and attic insulation; solar screens; weather stripping and caulking; a new wall furnace; and compact fluorescent lights.



Elisa Teveni smiles as sun shines on her front window which now has a solar screen thanks to the Casa Verde SA weatherization program, a partnership between CPS Energy and the city of San Antonio. Photo by Vincent McDonald, courtesy of CPS Energy

"This initiative is a great example of how government can directly impact people's lives in a positive way," said Mayor Julian Castro. "Not only are thousands of San Antonio homeowners living in more efficient homes and paying lower utility bills, CPS Energy and the city have put together an initiative that is ahead of schedule and weatherizing more homes than first thought possible."

Launched in December 2009, Casa Verde SA originally aimed to provide weatherization assistance to 1,400 customers in two years. That initial goal was reached within one year, reducing electricity consumption and bills by 25% for the average program recipient, the city said.

The program was granted \$12.4 million and later received \$4.1 million of additional funds, due to its success. Of the \$16.5 million in federal funds, which are administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, just \$13.1 million has been spent, yet the program has surpassed its goals, the city said. City officials expect the program to have weatherized 3,400 homes by the spring of 2012.

"Our entire community benefits every time a home is weatherized through this program," said CPS Energy President and CEO Doyle Beneby. "Improving the efficiency of these homes saves energy and keeps all of our rates down by slowing the need to build an additional power plant."

"We're also creating jobs for the companies performing the weatherization work and those jobs result in more money spent in our local economy," added City Manager Sheryl Sculley. "The weatherization program aligns with our common vision of a new energy economy where energy efficiency is a priority."

Casa Verde SA provides energy efficiency improvements, with an average project cost of \$4,200 per home. The program also addresses health and safety issues, decreasing risks such as carbon monoxide poisoning and mold. Federal stimulus dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act fund Casa Verde SA.

Once the federal funds are exhausted, CPS Energy plans to modify the weatherization initiative and allocate funds through the utility's Save for Tomorrow Energy Program. The goal of the STEP program is to save 771 MW of peak demand by 2020.

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