

Reprinted with permission.

News, Page 1B

Dec. 2, 2011

## Program recognizes efficiencies

By Joe Knight

Leader-Telegram staff

A warmer house, savings on energy bills, fewer greenhouse gases produced and, to top it off, free pizza.

These are the multiple benefits of students participating in SCORE — Student and Community Outreach on Rental Efficiencies.

The program provides a free energy audit on student rentals, along with up to \$60 of free materials to make the house more energy efficient. If two-thirds of the residents in the household participate, free pizza will be thrown in as an added incentive, said Jim Boulter, UW-Eau Claire associate professor of chemistry and Sustainability Fellow.

Off-campus student rentals tend to be old buildings, but the landlords don't have much incentive to invest in weatherization because students pay the energy bills. The students don't have an incentive to spend money and time on weatherization because they are short-term residents and often have little expendable income, Boulter said.

The program, which will ultimately be funded by Xcel Energy, will be a good deal for the resident students, for the landlords — who will get a more energy-efficient house — and for Xcel, which encourages energy efficiency, proponents said.

"For us, the best kilowatt is the one we don't have to produce because people are maximizing efficiency," said James Hanke, Xcel's manager of economic development and customer and community service.

The company would rather save energy through conservation than have to build another power plant, he said. Xcel gave the students a \$14,000 grant to get the program started.

Hanke said Xcel is viewing this as a pilot program that may be expanded to UW-La Crosse and UW-Stout in the future.

The idea for SCORE came from the University of Colorado at Boulder, said Boulter.

LEADER-TELEGRAM

# EAU CLAIRE *now*

*anything & everything Chippewa Valley*

Reprinted with permission.

Tyrel Zich, a junior who is heading up the group locally, said six students will be trained as "energy educators" to visit participating homes and conduct free energy audits. They will provide \$60 worth of materials, including a low-flow shower head, 10 energy-efficient light bulbs, weather stripping and a window insulating kit, and install the products.

However, the largest potential savings of energy and water come through education, which is where the pizza comes in as an incentive, Zich said.

The energy audits begin in February, but houses are being signed up now. The program hopes to have 100 off-campus rentals next semester; about 75 households already have signed up online, Zich said. Those include about 25 fraternities and sororities.

Next year the organization plans to handle 200 or 300 houses and possibly partner with Chippewa Valley Technical College, he said.

*Knight can be reached at 715-830-5835, 800-236-7077 or [joe.knight@ecpc.com](mailto:joe.knight@ecpc.com).*