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**Lt. Governor Celebrates Completion of 20,000 Houses Weatherized
through the Home Energy Conservation Program**

INDIANAPOLIS- Lt. Governor Becky Skillman joined state agency and utility leaders this afternoon to celebrate the weatherization of 20,000 homes – five months ahead of schedule – through Indiana’s federally funded Home Energy Conservation Program. In addition to the 20,000-home benchmark, Lt. Governor Skillman touted a federal audit that showed no “material problems” with the Indiana’s program.

“Nationwide, this program has been a magnet for waste, fraud, and abuse. But in Indiana we did it right,” said Lt. Governor Skillman, who chairs the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA). “We reached our goal five months early, we saved money allowing us to complete additional homes, and abuse is nonexistent.”

Indiana’s had a few unique aspects that led to this success. First, comprehensive training was provided to contractors, ensuring work was done correctly the first time. In many states, audits discovered homes that needed to be re-done. Secondly, Indiana instituted bulk purchasing for all contractors, which saved money on weatherization materials. Finally, a \$5,000 limit was placed on each home, instead of the federally recommended \$6,500 limit. This allowed more homes to be affected overall.

In a typical year, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) allocates funds for Indiana to weatherize about 2,000 homes. Stimulus funding increased that amount tenfold. Research has found that these energy savings activities typically result in a 20-30% savings in a household’s utility bill.

Lt. Governor Skillman celebrated the milestone at the home of a weatherization client on Indianapolis’ near north side. Energy conservation efforts that took place at this home included: a new furnace, a new water heater, new attic insulation, and air sealing around windows and doors. This home has been weatherized by the Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation (WECC) with additional funding from Citizens Gas and Indianapolis Power and Light Company (IPL).

Skillman was joined today by representatives from Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation, members of the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority staff, and executives from Citizens Gas and Indianapolis Power and Light.

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Weatherization tips:

- Make sure your home or business has proper insulation.
- Properly maintain your heating system (including changing the filter regularly).
- Use a programmable thermostat (or turn the temperature down a few degrees during bedtime and when the home or business is unoccupied).
- Check weather stripping, caulk and seals and make needed repairs.
- Make sure furnace ducts are properly sealed.
- Insulate your water heater (if the manufacturer's instructions allow).
- Purchase and use appliances with the Energy Star label.
- Wear appropriate winter clothing and adjust your thermostat accordingly.
- Take additional small steps to improve efficiency (such as opening draperies during the day but closing them at night and setting ceiling fans to run clockwise during winter).

Energy safety tips:

- Keep space heaters away from furniture, draperies and rugs. Do not let children or pets go near them, and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Do not use a space heater when sleeping, and never leave one unattended.
- Only use a kerosene heater in a well-ventilated area.
- Never use an oven or stove to heat the home.
- If you smell natural gas or otherwise suspect a leak, leave the premises immediately. Once you are off the property and can no longer smell the leak, call 911.
- Don't overload extension cords or electric outlets. Do not use outlets with loose-fitting plugs.
- Check pilot lights on gas appliances regularly. The pilot light should be a steady, blue flame.
- Never touch a downed power line; always assume that every power line is live.

For more information on energy efficiency, budget billing and safety:

- Hoosiers Care: www.hoosierscare.in.gov
- Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC): www.in.gov/oucc or 1-888-441-2494.
- Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC): www.in.gov/iurc.
- U.S. Department of Energy: www.energysavers.gov or 1-800-363-3732; an insulation fact sheet is available at www.ornl.gov/roofs+walls/insulation.
- Your local natural gas utility.

For low-income billing and weatherization assistance:

- Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA): www.in.gov/ihcda or 1-800-872-0371
- Your local Community Action Agency

Insulation deduction on state income taxes:

- Indiana Department of Revenue: IT-40 booklet, page 20, www.in.gov/dor.

Federal income tax credits for energy efficiency:

- U.S. Department of Energy: www.energy.gov or 1-800-DIAL-DOE

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