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NESEA presents 2008 Green Building Open House

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How do you reduce fuel costs, increase energy efficiency, and create a healthy environment in your home or building?

The Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) invites the public to visit local sustainable buildings across N.E. to talk with energy-saving experts during the 2008 Green Buildings Open House on Saturday, October 4th. NESEA's Green Buildings Open House, part of the American Solar Energy Society's National Solar Tour, is an opportunity to learn first-hand how incorporating green elements can help reduce heating costs, increase energy conservation, and even generate surplus clean energy.

Private homes, businesses, public buildings, and renewable energy installations throughout Mass. will open their doors and welcome the public to tour, ask questions, and discover the ways people are conserving energy, saving money, and protecting the environment. The Green Buildings Open House, sponsored by Efficiency Maine, a Division of the Maine Public Utilities Commission; GroSolar; National Grid; New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA); and NRG Systems, will be held in all six New England states, plus N.Y., N.J., Penn., and Delaware. Last year, thousands of people toured over 600 energy-efficient buildings from Penn. to Maine to experience the variety of ways presently being used to conserve energy, save money on energy bills, and help reduce the carbon footprint of their homes or other buildings. A complete list of green buildings open house sites and events is available at www.nesea.org/buildings/openhouse. Use the list of open houses in your area to plan a visit or design your own tour of several local green buildings.

David Barclay, NESEA executive director, said, "With fuel costs on the rise, the opportunity to talk one on one with building and home owners about ways they have reduced their fuel consumption is invaluable. The green buildings open house presents ways to save money on energy costs and showcases how clean renewable energy is being used today. It is an easy way to learn from people who are living and working happily and comfortably with their energy-efficient choices."

Examples of green features that are used in homes and buildings that will be open during this event include passive solar heating (advantageous placement of windows), solar hot water collection and storage, radiant floor heating, the generation of electricity by using photovoltaics (solar panels) or wind, use of energy-saving appliances and techniques (super-insulation and sealing air spaces), use of sustainable and healthy building materials, and the use of water-saving fixtures.

To improve indoor air quality, green building materials that address allergy/asthma-sensitive people include paints, insulation, and carpeting. Also demonstrated is the use of local, sustainable-harvested wood products. Visitors may also learn about how they can support the expanded development of renewable energy by purchasing clean renewable energy through their utility company or a green electricity provider.

There are a variety of ways to reduce energy costs of a home or building. Three easy and relatively inexpensive ways are to change all light bulbs to compact fluorescent, seal air leaks to reduce drafts, and turn off power strips to appliances when not in use.

Available at each host site will be NESEA's Sustainable Green Pages. Listed in this publication are organizations and individuals that offer sustainable products and services in the northeast U.S. that include quality building practices, energy services, and transportation. In addition, state and federal incentives (tax credits, grants, rebates, and discount utility rates) are available at www.dsireusa.org for renewable energy and energy-efficiency technologies. Check www.EnergyStar.gov for federal tax-credit information on qualified appliances and products.

Green Buildings Open House media partners include CSRwire, E/The Environmental Magazine, ecological Home Ideas, Environmental Design + Construction, Green Builder Magazine, Green Living Journal, High-Profile Monthly, metrogreenbusiness.org, New Jersey & Co., the New England Real Estate Journal, New York House, and Smart HomeOwner magazine.

The Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) is the Northeast's leading organization of professionals working in sustainable energy, whole systems thinking and green technologies. NESEA facilitates the widespread adoption and use of sustainable energy by providing support to industry professionals and by educating and motivating consumers to learn about, ask for and adopt sustainable energy and green building practices. NESEA accomplishes this through a number of ongoing programs and annual events including: Building Energy Conference and Trade Show, K-12 education, the Sustainability Workshop series, and the Sustainable Green Pages. For more information, visit www.nesea.org

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