



MAYOR DAVID J. NARKEWICZ

City of Northampton

Office of the Mayor

210 Main Street Room 12

Northampton, MA 01060-3199

(413) 587-1249 Fax: (413) 587-1275

mayor@northamptonma.gov

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Two New Energy Programs for Northampton Residents Available this Summer

The City of Northampton is announcing two programs beginning this summer that will help Northampton residents and businesses lower energy bills, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help protect vulnerable residents during heat waves. The city, working with a team of volunteer residents and a selected contractor will run *HeatSmart Northampton*, which aims to reduce the cost and effort of installing cold climate air source heat pumps. Cold climate air source heat pumps are a new highly efficient technology that can heat and cool all or parts of your home or business. The Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation Energy LLC is sponsoring the second program, called ener-G-save. This program will provide homeowners with thermal images of their homes to help them identify areas where energy is leaking, and then assist them in taking steps to weatherize their homes. The two programs are highly complementary because air source heat pumps perform at their highest efficiency when a home is well insulated and air-sealed.

Mayor David Narkewicz, who recently pledged Northampton to maintaining the goals enshrined in the Paris Climate Change Agreement stated that, “Northampton is once again taking action at a local level to help our residents and businesses lead the way to adopting clean energy technologies of the future.”

Through a public procurement process, the city has selected Express Plumbing & Heating out of Hatfield, MA, as the installer of air source heat pumps. Additional installers may be added if demand is high enough. Express Plumbing & Heating will work with the city to provide installation services at reduced pricing to Northampton residents and businesses. Similarly, the Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation Energy LLC will identify one or more home performance contractors to help homeowners add insulation and air sealing to their homes. In both cases, contractors will help participants’ access state and utility rebates to further reduce costs.

While these two programs will be collaborating this summer, they were conceived of separately. *HeatSmart Northampton* started with an effort by five New England communities to obtain technical assistance to increase the market share of air source heat pumps. The cities of Boston, Somerville and Northampton, MA, Portland ME and Providence RI obtained a Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance grant to help set up efforts such as Northampton’s *HeatSmart* program.

Ener-G-save started when philanthropist Harold Grinspoon learned about a newly-developed thermal imaging technology that can identify home energy leaks quickly and cost effectively. Harold decided to set up *ener-G-save* to use this thermal imaging technology to educate and inspire Pioneer Valley home owners to reduce energy use. *Ener-G-save* will be running in 9 other local towns this summer as well.

Similar to the successful Solarize Northampton program, a team of Northampton residents has stepped up to work with the city to promote *HeatSmart Northampton* and *ener-G-save*, in order to help their neighbors learn about ways to reduce our dependence on polluting fossil fuels, lower energy bills and help prepare the community for increased occurrences of heat waves predicted to occur due to a warming climate.

One of those residents, Adele Franks, who volunteers for Climate Action Now and works with volunteers with Mothers out Front to advocate for clean energy, said, “these programs can help us do our part to diminish the disruptive changes to our climate. Our volunteers are committed to reaching out to local residents of all income levels to help reduce fossil fuel use in an equitable way.”

HeatSmart Northampton will be signing people up to install air source heat pumps from late July through early 2018. *ener-g-save* will be mailing out thermal imaging reports to roughly half of Northampton’s owner-occupied single family homes in September, and will provide follow-up support to make it as easy as possible for homeowners to access free energy audits, financial incentives and qualified contractors for weatherizing their homes.

For more information on *HeatSmart Northampton* visit www.northamptonma.gov/heatsmart

For more information on *ener-G-save* visit <http://ener-g-save.com/>