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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Home Energy Technology Allows Homeowners to Heat Homes While Generating Electricity

Environment-friendly system redefines energy efficiency

Mid-Atlantic (November 15, 2009) – For much of the Mid-Atlantic, high heating bills have become as synonymous with winter as snowplows and ski trips. But this winter, a new home energy technology allows homeowners to turn home heating into power generation.

Freewatt technology, manufactured by ECR International, uses micro-combined heat and power (micro-CHP) technology and combines a furnace and generator to make electricity and heat the home.

Developed with support from the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC), Freewatt was featured in the American Gas Industry Showroom at the International Builders Show (IBS), the world's largest light construction show held in January.

“Freewatt is the only system available that heats the home while producing electricity,” said Maggie Reed Lutz, ECR International senior marketing representative. “Homeowners who operate Freewatt for an average of 4,000 hours a year can produce nearly 5,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity, which saves money and reduces their carbon footprint by up to 6,000 pounds of greenhouse gases per year. Meanwhile, Freewatt is significantly more efficient at producing electricity than the electric utility, using 60 percent less fuel.”

Using the concept of net metering, electricity not immediately used in the home will spin the electric meter backward to gain a credit toward the electric bill for electricity generated by the homeowner's system. In areas where net metering isn't available, homeowners may be able to sell unused electricity back to the energy grid.

Tracy Burlison, PERC director of residential trade outreach and partnerships, cited a recent PERC-sponsored study in which 80 percent of surveyed homeowners said they were concerned about their homes' energy efficiency.

“Homeowners are increasingly interested in using energy-efficient appliances,” said Burleson. “We’re excited to support Freewatt in developing this breakthrough technology and making the system accessible for homeowners. The propane industry’s investment in funding the research and development for the Freewatt system helps address the more than 50 percent of homeowners who are interested in home appliances that make their homes more energy-efficient.”

Freewatt technology is currently available to consumers who use natural gas. A propane version, Freewatt Plus, will feature backup power capability and is expected to be available by spring 2010. Homeowners can install a Freewatt-ready system in preparation for Freewatt Plus, and certified professionals can install systems in both new and existing construction. Both warm air and forced hot-water distribution systems have Freewatt system solutions.

For additional information about the Freewatt system or making green energy decisions in your home, consumers can visit www.usepropane.com or www.freewatt.com. Construction professionals can visit www.buildwithpropane.com or www.freewatt.com.



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