

## **Virginia WarmWise partner providing key support for weatherization**

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One of Columbia Gas of Virginia's (CGV's) WarmWise program partners last week showed off its new state of the art facility that offers hands on training to students who will provide energy audits and home weatherization to residents of Virginia and other states.

Under Virginia's Conservation and Ratemaking Efficiency (CARE) law, utilities offering efficiency programs must include a component that addresses the needs of low-income customers. CGV elected to form a partnership with NRCERT, a subsidiary of Community Housing Partners (CHP), a non-profit organization which operates training programs for home weatherization, residential energy conservation techniques, home performance training, and heating and cooling. CHP also provides weatherization services for low-income families throughout Virginia.

Under the partnership, CGV is providing funds over a three-year period to support the NRCERT auditor training program.

Chris Griffin, CGV's manager of customer efficiency programs, said the site visit was helpful in understanding the effectiveness of the NRCERT program.

"The training facility is an outstanding example of the benefit of the partnerships we've formed through WarmWise that not only lead to more energy efficiency resources being deployed where they are needed, but also provide opportunities for new job skills and employment opportunities," Griffin said.

In March, NRCERT completed work on a new 10,000 square foot training facility in Christiansburg, which incorporates state-of-the-art equipment and demonstration modules that enable trainers to provide hands-on training. NRCERT Director Mark Jackson said that the organization has completed more than 4,600 training hours between November 2009 and March 2010. With the expanded facility, NRCERT anticipates that it will surpass 10,000 training hours in the second quarter 2010 alone.

*This article was contributed by Innes, Robert C.*

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