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New Smart Thermostat Initiative Set to Bring Big Savings to Northern Illinois

*Up To \$120 in Rebates for Technology Offering Comfort, Control and Lower Energy Bills; ComEd, North Shore Gas, Peoples Gas, Advocacy Groups Set **Target of One Million Smart Thermostats Over Five Years***

CHICAGO – People across Northern Illinois are now eligible for rebates on smart thermostats that can cut the cost of the devices in half, making the convenience and increased control of energy use more affordable.

“As managers of one of the largest energy efficiency programs in the nation, we are always looking for opportunities to bring value to our customers and provide them with access to new technologies that will help them enhance their electric usage, reduce costs and improve their green footprint. We are glad to be collaborating with advocacy, government, utility and product partners who have the same goals and believe that by working together, we can achieve greater success,” said ComEd President and CEO Anne Pramaggiore at a press conference Thursday.

Pramaggiore was joined by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy, Illinois Commerce Commission Chairman Brien Sheahan, officials from Nicor Gas, Peoples Gas, North Shore Gas, the Environmental Law & Policy Center and Citizens Utility Board, and executives from smart thermostat manufacturers ecobee and Nest Labs.

The smart thermostat initiative, a partnership between the utilities and advocacy groups, is the largest effort of its kind in the nation. It makes ecobee3 and the Nest Learning Thermostat eligible for up to \$120 in rebates for customers with Wi-Fi, central air, and a furnace. The rebates nearly halve the cost of the devices which retail for \$249.

The availability of rebates for ecobee3 and the Nest Learning Thermostat when purchased in stores significantly expands the initiative launched earlier in the year, creating three ways customers can take advantage of increased savings: DIY installation, purchasing through a heating and cooling contractor, or purchasing through a utility energy advisor during a home energy assessment.

“We have a target of installing one million smart thermostats across ComEd, North Shore Gas, and Peoples Gas territory over the next five years,” said Rob Kelter, senior attorney with the Environmental Law & Policy Center. “What makes this a game changer is that customers can achieve significant savings on their energy bills, while improving the comfort of their homes.”

Smart thermostats are Wi-Fi-enabled devices that allow residents to easily control the heating and air conditioning settings in a home through their smartphones, tablets, and computers. The technology is smart because it learns or adapts to user behavior over time and can generate energy savings automatically. Residents remain comfortable when at home and reduce wasted money on heating and cooling energy while away at work or on vacation.

“Smart thermostats bring control of home energy bills literally into a customer’s hands, as energy use can be easily managed from the touchscreen of a mobile device,” said David Kolata, executive director of Citizens Utility Board. “With these devices, customers have the ability to finely tune and monitor energy use from the convenience of their phone, tablet, or home computer.”

Brien Sheahan, Chairman of the Illinois Commerce Commission, applauded the public-private partnership that led to the groundbreaking initiative.

"Innovation in energy-efficient products creates enormous opportunities for cost-effective energy savings," he said, "This initiative, which will be the largest smart thermostat effort in the nation, is the direct result of collaboration between ComEd, Nicor Gas, Peoples Gas, North Shore Gas, ELPC, and CUB with the support of the Illinois Commerce Commission to deliver cutting edge technology to homes across northern Illinois. I am proud that a public-private partnership is embracing the opportunities that come with being technology enablers and I am even more proud that this initiative has the capacity to deliver real savings to customers."

For more information visit:

ComEd: ComEd.com/HomeSavings

Nicor Gas: nicorgasrebates.com

Peoples Gas: peoplesgasrebates.com

North Shore Gas: northshoregasrebates.com