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Rural Clark County *Does* Qualify for Energy Retrofit Funds

Because of poor wording, many contractors and auditors preparing to implement energy audits and retrofits for low-income homeowners throughout Clark County, will not include many of the rural communities in their bids. Candidate for Assembly District 20 Lynn Goya discovered the discrepancy when contractors at a recent energy audit meeting told her that her community did not qualify for funds.

“Many of the homes in my assembly are older,” says Goya. “Yet as they read the RFP, Mesquite, Overton, Logandale, Moapa, Boulder City, Nelson, Searchlight, Laughlin and all the small rural communities don’t qualify for program dollars, so they aren’t including them in their bids. We need to clarify this as soon as possible so that homes within my assembly are not shut out of stimulus funds.”

The federal stimulus funds known as “Cash for Caulkers” reimburses contactors for their time and materials when they install energy-saving services and products like caulking windows, maximizing ductwork efficiency and insulating walls. The state’s portion of stimulus funds were divvied up by the State Department of Housing by county and then within counties by key population areas. Contractors are in the process of submitting bids to repair homes within those areas, but many communities within Clark County will be left out in the cold as contractors follow the guidelines as stated in the request for proposal.

The state has allocated caulker funds for 619 households within unincorporated Clark County; 473 homes within the City of Las Vegas; 176 homes within the City of North Las Vegas; 205 homes within the City of Henderson; 335 homes within Washoe County; 126 homes within Eastern Rural Nevada; and 126 homes within Western Rural Nevada. Washoe and Clark Counties are excluded from the Rural Nevada funds, because they receive designated funds.

Many of her constituents are hurting, says Goya. Boulder City residents got a 35 percent rate increase in January and many residents throughout AD 20 would benefit from reduced energy bills. Experts estimate a home’s energy bill could drop over 25 percent per month after energy reduction measures. The increased efficiency benefits neighbors and the community because it reduces overall demand for power throughout the day, including during peak times.

“I called the State Housing Division and at first, they didn’t know how my assembly fell within the guidelines. But we now agree that “Unincorporated Clark County” will be changed to read “the Balance of Clark County.” Contractors can service homes in the outlying areas of Clark County under the those funds. But if no one knows, we still may be shut out. We need to ensure that contractors realize they can include our communities in the bids so that we don’t get left out in the cold,” says Goya.