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National Conservation Grant Funds Energy Efficiency Plan for Rural Arizonans

Funds Will Result in Fewer Greenhouse Gas Emissions and More Green in the Pockets of Santa Cruz County Residents

One of 48 *TogetherGreen* national innovation grants will power new efforts to help a rural Arizona community to significantly reduce their dependence on fossil fuel consumption through energy-efficient upgrades and greener standards on new construction. The Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch, Audubon Arizona, Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum and Cienega Watershed Partnership will team up to bring energy efficient technology and a grassroots educational network that encourages individual conservation actions to Santa Cruz county, Arizona.

The \$24,000 grant will help provide the Mountain Empire area (Canelo, Elgin, Patagonia and Sonoita) with energy efficient technology and support. By creating a comprehensive outreach and education plan, the Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch and their partners hope to receive commitments from 25% of local home and business owners to install systems that will produce at least 2kW each, or to increase the energy efficiency of homes and businesses through conservation actions and technology upgrades, within two years.

Use of alternative energy methods and improvements in energy use will significantly reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of their community, improving the environment at large. And perhaps even more importantly, their experiences will be documented as a formal case study – their efforts will serve as a model for other rural communities, taking in-depth energy conservation far beyond Arizona.

“This grant is the corner stone of our community’s efforts to reduce their carbon footprint.” said Jeanne Horsemann, Project Leader “Not only will we be encouraging and assisting local residents and businesses, but our efforts will help other rural communities to decrease their dependence on fossil fuels.”

The Arizona innovation grant is part of \$1.1 million awarded by the *TogetherGreen* initiative this year. Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to fund conservation projects, train environmental leaders, and offer volunteer opportunities that significantly benefit the environment. Grantees were selected from scores of applicants across America. Funds were awarded to Audubon organizations that demonstrated exceptional innovation in working with other groups on projects that will produce tangible benefits for environmental quality.

“This project has amazing potential to make a difference for these community members, the communities themselves, and for the environment and we’re thrilled that *TogetherGreen* has a hand in getting it started,” added *TogetherGreen* Project Manager Judy Braus.

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About *TogetherGreen*

Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to build the promise of a greener, healthier future through innovation, leadership and volunteerism. Nearly 90 projects totaling more than \$2.5 million dollars have received Innovation Grants to protect land, water, and energy resources nationwide. For more information, visit www.togethergreen.org.

About Audubon

Now in its second century, Audubon connects people with birds, nature and the environment that supports us all. Our national network of community-based nature centers, chapters, scientific, education, and advocacy programs engages millions of people from all walks of life in conservation action to protect and restore the natural world. To learn more, visit www.audubon.org

About Toyota

Toyota (NYSE: TM) established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants. Toyota is committed to being a good corporate citizen in the communities where it does business and believes in supporting programs with long-term sustainable results. Toyota supports numerous organizations across the country, focusing on education, the environment and safety. Since 1991, Toyota has contributed more than \$464 million to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit www.toyota.com/community.