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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE;

## **Check out the MN ENERGY STAR Challenge- Coming to your community today!**

MINNEAPOLIS, MN - Minnesota building owners are being challenged to achieve 20 percent energy savings and to certify 1,000 buildings through the ENERGY STAR program during the next decade as part of the just-announced [Minnesota ENERGY STAR Challenge](#).

The Minnesota ENERGY STAR Challenge is a statewide project organized by the [Great Plains Institute \(GPI\)](#), the [U.S. Green Building Council – Minnesota](#), and the [Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Energy Smart](#) program. The Challenge is supported by a grant from the [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#) and in-kind contributions from several utilities.

The Challenge seeks to lessen environmental impacts that result from excessive energy use in our built environment. Nearly 20 percent of the nation's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from commercial buildings. On average, buildings that are ENERGY STAR certified use 35 percent less energy than comparable buildings, reducing air emissions as well as operating costs.

"Minnesota building owners are embracing energy efficiency and the cost savings that result, but there's so much more to do," said GPI President & CEO Rolf Nordstrom, noting that more than 600 commercial buildings in Minnesota are currently ENERGY STAR certified. "In many cases, building energy efficiency investments can be made – and paid for with energy savings achieved – in a relatively short period of

time, making those investments a ‘win’ for the environment and a ‘win’ for business owners’ pocket books. You don’t have to look farther than the Science Museum of Minnesota’s recent retrofits to see how large those savings can be!”

Owners of commercial buildings who are interested in participating in the Challenge can now sign up to receive:

- Free education and assistance related to energy benchmarking
- Energy reduction strategies
- National recognition through the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Certain qualified buildings may also be eligible for free technical assistance for building upgrades or other measures through the program.

“We look forward to offering our energy consultation and benchmarking services to Minnesota businesses that step up to the challenge,” said Minnesota Chamber Director of Environment Sustainability Programs Jill Curran, noting that the Energy Smart program is an ENERGY STAR partner having benchmarked numerous buildings that have achieved the ENERGY STAR rating, “This certification is a great way for businesses to show the world that they are walking the energy efficiency talk.”

The Challenge is open to all owners and managers of existing buildings located in the State of Minnesota, with eligible properties. The Challenge will run until January 2017, with recognition in April 2017. More information on the ENERGY STAR challenge can be found at [www.mnenergystarchallenge.com](http://www.mnenergystarchallenge.com).

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*The **Great Plains Institute** is a non-partisan non-profit organization that uses consensus-based strategies to discover and implement politically durable solutions to society’s most pressing energy and climate challenges. Learn more at [www.betterenergy.org](http://www.betterenergy.org).*

***U.S. Green Building Council – Minnesota Chapter (USGBC-MN)** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community of members, advocates and practitioners that give voice to our commitment to improve human health, support economies and protect the environment through green buildings. The Minnesota Chapter is one of 79 USGBC Chapters across the country and serves the community by educating and advocating for green building principles and practices. For more information, visit <http://www.usgbcmn.org>.*

*The **Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Energy Smart Program** helps Minnesota businesses find ways to save energy and connect to financial incentives. The program is funded through state-approved utility conservation programs. All services are at no cost. For more information, visit <http://www.mnenergysmart.com>.*