

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT:

Barbara K. Mednick (651-486-7007)

bmednick@bkmconsulting.com

Minnesota's K-12 Schools Leading Nation in Saving Energy and Reducing Pollution

Schools for Energy Efficiency Program Provides Effective Way for Schools to Save Energy and Help the Environment

WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINN. (May 16, 2007) – Minnesota's K-12 schools are leading the nation with 12 ENERGY STAR Leader Awards for continuous improvements in energy efficiency district-wide by participating in the Schools for Energy Efficiency™ (SEE) program, a division of Hallberg Engineering, Inc., a mechanical and electrical engineering firm in White Bear Lake, Minn. A total of only 28 school districts in the nation have received this award for environmental leadership from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Through the SEE program, the 250 participating schools in Minnesota avoided more than \$6.7 million in energy costs in only three years. The environmental impact of this saved energy is a reduction of 169 million pounds of CO² greenhouse gases (the same amount of carbon dioxide 63,936 acres of pine forest store in a year, or 16,607 passenger cars give off in a year, or the same amount 9,849 households using electricity emit in a year). In addition, more than 70 school facilities in the program qualify for ENERGY STAR Labels, which puts them in the top 25 percent of efficiently-operated school facilities in the United States.

“As the concern for the long-term viability of our environment increases, it's important for schools to change behaviors to save energy,” explains Joe Hallberg, president, SEE program of Hallberg Engineering, Inc.

“Improving energy efficiency is a great way for schools to demonstrate responsibility and leadership to their communities. It also shows the significant fiscal and environmental benefits of energy management.”

According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, “there is substantial evidence that human activities, which are producing greenhouse gases and other air pollution, are significantly affecting climate, ecosystems, and public health. In fact, in Minnesota nearly all CO² greenhouse gas emissions are the result of fossil fuel combustion for transportation, electricity, and heating.” The U.S. Department of Energy underscores the need for schools to save energy, since it represents 16 percent of a school district's manageable costs — making energy a major source of avoidable spending for school districts.

The EPA recently named the SEE program “2007 ENERGY STAR *Partner of the Year – Service and Product Provider*” for outstanding energy management and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions for their work with schools. Their accomplishments were recognized March 21, 2007 at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Saving energy is important for schools because it:

- **Reduces energy waste** – about 25 percent of energy consumed in schools is not used efficiently.
- **Saves money** – annual energy costs can rise to \$250 per student — a major source of avoidable spending.
- **Demonstrates responsibility to taxpayers** – efficient operations use taxpayer money wisely and redirect money towards educational needs.
- **Preserves the environment** – the majority of pollution is from the production, consumption, and distribution of energy so saving energy reduces pollution and the use of non-renewable resources.
- **Educates students** – by instilling wise energy habits, which helps to create lifelong conservationists.
- **Improves the learning environment** – there is a positive correlation between the physical condition of the learning environment and student performance. Many energy efficient practices help create better lighting, temperature control, acoustics and air quality.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that about 25 percent of the energy used in a typical school is wasted because the systems and operations are not as energy efficient as they could be. “School districts in Minnesota realize this and use the SEE program’s comprehensive approach to changing the daily habits of school district staff and students to reduce energy usage and make a difference. The positive results achieved show it’s working,” says Hallberg.

The SEE program was developed in 2003 by Hallberg Engineering, a mechanical and electrical engineering firm with over 25 years experience serving Minnesota school districts. SEE was created in response to client's needs for a flexible, self-implemented plan that would help them achieve immediate savings in energy usage and create a culture of energy efficiency. Following are the Minnesota school districts participating in the SEE program:

- Austin ISD 492
- Burnsville/Eagan/Savage ISD 191
- Buffalo/Hanover/Montrose ISD 877
- Cambridge/Isanti ISD 911
- Columbia Heights ISD 13
- Mahtomedi ISD 832
- North St Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale ISD 622
- St Cloud ISD 742
- St Louis Park ISD 283
- St Paul Public Schools ISD 625
- South Washington County ISD 833
- Stillwater ISD 831
- West St Paul ISD 197
- Willmar ISD 347

Hallberg Engineering, Inc. (www.hallbergengineering.com), White Bear Lake, Minn, specializes in mechanical, electrical, and technology systems design, along with building analysis and commissioning/recommissioning. Services also include system upgrades and retrofits to improve indoor air quality and energy conservation. Hallberg’s mechanical and electrical services cover a wide range of sectors across the country.