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For Immediate Release

Homeowners – the New “Biggest Losers” in Fight against Global Warming

Teams of friends and neighbors cut home energy costs, build community, and help slow climate change

Medford, MA ~ The Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN) announces its **Low Carbon Living (LoCaL) Program**—a friendly way to reduce the cost of home energy and the impacts of global warming. With this program, beginning this fall, groups of five to eight households in a community will use teamwork and behavior change to “lose 5,000 pounds of carbon in 30 days.” Members of a team with eight households will lose at least 40,000 pounds of carbon in a month and slash each home’s energy bills, while developing stronger community bonds. The LoCaL program is modeled on the successful Low Carbon Diet (LCD), which was developed and tested by the nationally known Empowerment Institute.

Households will measure their carbon footprints before they begin the program, and will continue monitoring as they reduce carbon emissions. Participants will improve their energy efficiency and “lose” pounds of carbon dioxide by making their own choices from a suggested list of 22 items, including areas such as solid waste disposal, use of hot water, home heating and cooling, and personal vehicles. Teams will make changes to their household systems and their lifestyles to reduce carbon emissions, and will take other actions to become carbon neutral.

Each LoCaL team will meet 3-4 times to compare progress and support each other, while getting to know each other better and developing ties in their community. MCAN will monitor the teams’ progress, and will present awards for the “biggest losers.” MCAN will run a series of events and activities to support the program, as well as providing additional information, resources, and other types of support to chapters that join the program.

As teams lose their first 5,000 pounds, members may want to start other teams of neighbors, friends, co-workers, and faith communities. The LoCaL Program will run for three years. In the first year alone, MCAN plans to set up teams in at least ten towns across the state. Participants will lose more than the weight of 20 cars —up to 400,000 pounds of carbon—by September of 2008. Over the three years, MCAN plans to grow the LoCaL Program throughout Massachusetts, and expects Massachusetts to become the country’s “Biggest Loser” of global warming emissions.

MCAN was founded to link together local climate action groups and help them increase their effectiveness in reducing global warming emissions at the local level and through state and regional advocacy. MCAN now has chapters in 35 Massachusetts communities.

MCAN welcomes other communities to join in the fight against global warming. For a list of MCAN communities and other information, visit www.massclimateaction.org/index.htm.

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More information about the Low Carbon Diet and the Empowerment Institute is available at: <http://www.empowermentinstitute.net/lcd/index.html>