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Media Advisory

Senator Harkin Visits Consumers Energy to Learn of Smart Grid Project

Senator Tom Harkin has scheduled a tour of Consumers Energy's headquarters facility on Saturday morning at 11:00 a.m., February 6, 2010, to learn about Consumers Energy's participation in a national demonstration project of Smart Grid technologies with the help of a grant recently awarded by the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE). Consumers Energy is located at 2074 242nd Street, Marshalltown. Sixteen other rural electric cooperatives from across ten states in the U.S. are participating in the Smart Grid Demonstration Project. This is the first nationwide pilot extending and testing technologies from power plant to end consumer, and the results will help build a more efficient and functional electrical grid.

The plan for the Smart Grid Demonstration Project will include Consumers Energy installing and operating a suite of new technologies to gather data to determine overall benefits and cost-effectiveness of the technologies. Ultimately the project will help determine if the technology is ready and economically feasible for mass deployment in rural communities served by cooperatives. A sampling of Consumers Energy's members will be selected to participate in this project. Each participating household will receive an in-home display (IHD) unit that will provide energy usage information in real time to the member; and they will be asked to provide feedback on its design, operation and functionality. The data from Consumers Energy will then be compiled with that of the other rural electric cooperatives participating in the project to identify which types of Smart Grid technologies work best.

If you want additional information about the Smart Grid Demonstration Project and Consumers Energy's participation in the project, please contact Public Relations Manager Deb Borton via the contact information listed above. Consumers Energy CEO/General Manager Brian Heithoff will be available for interviews to discuss the project upon request.