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Coalition of local groups launch campaign to help organizations transition to clean energy

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – Twenty-four organizations. Two years of work. One goal: “Carbon-free electricity will power our entire community, showing the nation that this transition is possible”. Today, the Go All Electric coalition launches a new campaign aimed at promoting the use of carbon-free electricity to power our region’s buildings and vehicles.

The AMPED campaign will use outreach, advertising and communication to connect organizations with information and resources to support their transition to clean-energy use.

Because the majority of local emissions come from building heating systems and on-road vehicles, the focus of the campaign is to encourage and support the transition of area organizations’ buildings and vehicles to technologies that are powered by carbon-free electricity, instead of fossil fuels.

“Our region’s power grid is already amongst the cleanest in the nation due to the high number of fossil-fuel-free energy sources: wind, solar, hydroelectric, and nuclear power,” said Abby McHugh-Grifa, Executive Director, Climate Solutions Accelerator. “So when we plug-in versus pipe-in or fill-up, we are dramatically lowering our carbon footprint.”

Why focus on organizations? When businesses, schools, nonprofits, churches and other organizations act as leaders in the transition to clean energy, they impact not only their own use of buildings and vehicles, but also influence their employees and customers. Improvements in technology and affordability mean they have much to gain economically, while also potentially addressing significant challenges in adapting to new climate policy requirements. “Our region’s economic development is very much linked to impacts from climate change,” said Jenny Loewenstein, Planner, Genesee/Finger Lakes Region Planning Council. “Our progress in transitioning to clean energy consumption helps create jobs to produce, sell and install heat pumps, charging stations, and electric vehicles. Protecting our area’s natural beauty and clean air is critical to attracting employers and workers.”

“The Rochester region is already leading the way with clean energy production and we must continue to maximize our efforts by ensuring our buildings and our vehicles use that clean energy,” said Congressman Joe Morelle. “Through the AMPED initiative, we will combat the damaging effects of climate change and create a brighter, greener Rochester for generations to come. Thank you to all of those whose tireless work made this happen and I look forward to our continued partnership to deliver the change our planet so desperately needs.”

Buildings that use heat pumps for heating and cooling benefit not only from lower operating costs (in some cases, more than 50%), but they also improve indoor air quality and provide a more stable temperature. This has been a significant benefit to the Henrietta Public Library, having installed a heat pump system in their new library in 2018. “The temperature in here is very consistent. It’s something that

we don't have to think about, which, from a management standpoint, is wonderful," said Adrienne Pettinelli, Library Director, Henrietta Public Library.

Since carbon pollution has a direct and local impact on air quality, replacing combustion-engine vehicles with electric vehicles can dramatically improve the air we breathe, especially in dense, urban communities. Our region has already made progress in putting electric buses on the road for public transit. "Electric vehicle models continue to expand at a rapid pace, both for light-duty transportation as well as medium- to heavy-duty work," said David Keefe, Coordinator, Greater Rochester Clean Cities Coalition. "And organizations that don't have fleet vehicles can still support the transition to electric vehicles by installing charging stations for their employees and customers."

The AMPED campaign was developed through a process facilitated by Causewave Community Partners and funded by the Climate Solutions Accelerator, Greater Rochester Clean Cities, New York State Pollution Prevention Institute and the City of Rochester. Collaborators in the campaign included representatives from those funders and Center for Community Health & Prevention, Common Ground Health, Dutton Properties, EMCOR Betlem, Empire State Development, Gallina Development, Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, Genesee Transportation Council, Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce, Monroe County, PathStone Corporation, Piekunka Systems Inc., Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester Housing Authority, Rochester Regional Health, Regional Transit Service, SWBR, and University of Rochester.

"We are all about collaborating with organizations to tackle big community issues," said Todd Butler, President and CEO of Causewave Community Partners. "The risks and current impacts of climate change affect everyone in our community and it's critical that we take action to reduce human-controlled causes. The AMPED campaign will help organization leaders take concrete steps to implement beneficial electrification in their institutions."

Rochester advertising agency Butler/Till provided more than \$90,000 in pro-bono work in the areas of strategy, creative, media, and content creation. Other pro bono creative support was provided by Soucier Designs, Grant Taylor Photography and Accountable Digital. The campaign will share inspiring stories and resources helpful to organizations looking to learn about beneficial electrification options, costs, and available incentives. Starting this month, the campaign will host monthly webinars covering a variety of building electrification and electric vehicle topics, all targeted at enabling organizations to take action. A campaign website, blog, social media accounts, advertising and email marketing campaign will reach organization leaders with these important messages and resources.

The free webinar series, "Get AMPED Forum" will happen monthly with the first event scheduled for Thursday, September 30, titled "Road to Electrification". Details and registration can be found on ampedproject.org.

The campaign encompasses a 9-county area in the New York Finger Lakes Region including Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates counties.

To learn more about the campaign and sign up for updates visit www.ampedproject.org.

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Causewave Community Partners is a nonprofit organization that partners with causes and organizations to ignite change in our community. Local businesses and professional volunteers partner with Causewave staff to serve hundreds of nonprofits each year. Causewave was founded in 1950 as The Advertising Council of Rochester. Find out more at causewave.org.