

## Indiana caught up with weatherizations

By Lesley Stedman Weidenbener • lstedman@courier-journal.com • August 17, 2010

INDIANAPOLIS – After a slow start, Indiana has now weatherized nearly 6,900 homes statewide under a program funded by federal stimulus dollars.

The improvement led the U.S. Department of Energy to release the second half of the state's \$131.7 million allocation for the weatherization program, which provides homeowners with improvements meant to lower their utility bills.

"We purposely spent time preparing for this program because we wanted to get it right," Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman, a Republican, said Tuesday of the state's slower start. "We're glad we were careful because it is paying off."

Skillman announced the state's achievements and the release of federal funds at the home of Paula and Kenny Holsclaw in Indianapolis. The couple received more than \$12,000 of home improvements – including about \$5,000 in weatherization efforts – from the Southeast Neighborhood Development Corp. (SEND), which is participating in the state program.

The improvements included a new roof, insulation, hot water heater and breaker box.

"It's going to save us money," Paula Holsclaw, 79, said Tuesday. "We could not have done it. It takes all we have to survive."

SEND is one of 10 groups that Gov. Mitch Daniels' administration tasked with working on homes under the stimulus program even though they were not part of an existing network of organizations that administered the state's normal weatherization program.

The Indiana Builders Association also had received significant funding under the program even though it had no previous experience with the weatherization program.

But Skillman said Tuesday that because the state would be receiving 10 times the weatherization money of any previous year, the Daniels administration wanted to expand the groups participating.

So far, about 51 percent of the 6,894 homes completed were weatherized by community action organizations that were part of the state's original network of contractors. The remaining 49 percent were completed by the 10 new contractors.