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VIVA VERDE'S KARYN NEIL (L.) DISCUSSES ENERGY CONSERVATION WITH DEMING HOMEOWNERS JUAN MADRID AND JENNY PAYAN (HOLDING DAUGHTER, MIA).

VIVA VERDE ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM UNDERWAY

by Richard Mahler, Newsletter Editor

On a frosty December morning, Juan Madrid and Jenny Payan open their Deming mobile home to a team of skilled conservation experts whose goal is to reduce gas and electricity bills while making the residence more comfortable, healthy, and Earth-friendly for the couple and their children, Mia and Damian. During the next hour, everyone in the family learns lessons about energy—and more.

"This is a blessing," said Payan, who arranged for the visit after seeing a flyer promoting the Viva Verde Residential Efficiency Program, a free service offered by GRIP to low-income residents of Luna and Hidalgo counties through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's US-Mexico Border 2012 Program. "I can't thank these people enough," added Madrid, as the four-person task force, with the focused precision of professionals, did its makeover.

Karyn Neil, an art student at Western New Mexico University and the program's director, supervised interns A.J. Sandoval and Arturo Ávila, fellow WNMU students from Silver City, and Grace Jones, an artist from Columbus. While Neil provided and discussed educational material with the homeowners, interns installed weather-stripping around doors and windows, caulked and foam-sealed cracks, installed low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators, insulated electrical outlets, and checked for leaky toilet tanks. The couple already had installed long-lasting and low-current CFL light bulbs, so were given a supply of spares.

"Juan and Jenny were very interested in learning about how to make their residence even more energy efficient," Neil said, before driving her team to another in a day-long series of appointments. "I suggested ways to save water

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: WHAT'S AT STAKE AS NEW ADMINISTRATION AND LEGISLATURE CONVENE?

by Allyson Siwik, Executive Director

Surface and groundwater protection, conservation of the free-flowing Gila River, creation of "green" jobs, and the transition to a clean-energy

economy are all threatened as a pro-industry administration takes control in Santa Fe on January 1. Governor-elect Susana Martinez has appointed businessmen from oil and gas, dairy and cattle ranching, to a selection committee charged with identifying candidates for top environment and energy department positions. This does not bode well for New Mexico's environmental laws, which continue to fall under attack by industry lobbyists. During the campaign, Martinez said she would put a moratorium on a cap-and-trade program if it was passed by the state's Environmental Improvement Board (see page 1) as well as on the "Pit Rule" which would protect groundwater quality at oil and gas operations. What's more, Martinez's new Director of Policy and Planning, Matt Kennicott, was recently chief of staff for the House Republican Caucus in the New Mexico House of Representatives, which cites "Gila River Water Development" as one of four water platform priorities. Martinez will decide if New Mexico diverts water from the Gila under the Arizona Water Settlements Act.

Environmental protection and conservation are

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EIB BOARD APPROVES STATE CARBON EMISSIONS CAP

The Environmental Improvement Board (EIB) voted in November to approve the New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) rule to implement a regional greenhouse gas cap-and-trade program through the Western Climate Initiative (WCI). "Addressing climate change immediately is the right thing to do," said Gov. Richardson. "I am pleased that the EIB adopted the program I have worked so hard to develop. I call on the federal government to build on New Mexico's program and the WCI to implement a national cap-and-trade system."

In a related decision, the EIB voted 4-1 to approve New Energy Economy's petition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the state's largest emitters, such as power plants, requiring them to reduce their emissions three percent per year from 2010 levels. The regulation would only take effect if the state's cap-and-trade plan fails or if a federal CO2 emissions rule is not forthcoming.

For details, visit www.nmenv.state.nm.us and New Energy Economy at <http://newenergyeconomy.org/>