



July 1, 2008 ALLENTOWN PA

**With energy prices continuing to rise more and more Pennsylvania homeowners are turning to the state's innovative energy efficiency financing program, the Keystone Home Energy Loan Program, (Keystone HELP™) for assistance in financing energy-saving and alternative energy home improvements.** Since its state-wide inception in 2006, nearly 3,000 homeowners in 64 of Pennsylvania's counties have financed over \$16 million in ENERGY STAR and other high efficiency home improvements. **Loan volume through June of 2008 is up 40% over the same period last year**, attributable to both increased demand and the program's expansion into larger loans for solar, geothermal and "whole house" energy improvements.

### **About Keystone HELP**

Keystone HELP is Pennsylvania's innovative homeowner financing program for high efficiency and renewable energy improvements. Originally begun as a regional pilot program by the West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund in 2005, Keystone HELP was taken statewide in 2006 with principal support provided by the Pennsylvania Treasury Department, and assistance from the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority and the Department of Community and Economic Development. A partnership with The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency expanded the program into larger "whole house" and renewable energy loans in 2008. **Over 700 independent Pennsylvania contracting businesses in the heating, cooling, remodeling and energy industries are authorized to perform work under the program.** Keystone HELP is administered by AFC First Financial Corporation, an Allentown-based specialty energy efficiency lender which is responsible for contractor recruitment, training and management as well as loan origination and servicing. Keystone HELP is also endorsed and promoted by all of the state's regulated utilities.

### **Financing Options**

**Keystone HELP is recognized as one of the most successful state-supported energy efficiency lending programs in the nation**, a public/private partnership utilizing a "sustainable" financing model, where available state money is ultimately recycled to be used for additional loans, rather than being used for one time rate "buy downs". The program is comprised of fixed rate, **unsecured loans from \$1,000 to \$10,000** with terms of up to 10 years primarily used for high efficiency heating and cooling, insulation and other energy-saving replacements and upgrades and **secured loans to \$35,000** for "whole house" energy improvements, solar, geothermal and other renewable energy projects with terms up to 20 years. All credit-qualifying Pennsylvania homeowners are eligible regardless of income level, and work must be performed by an Approved Keystone HELP Contractor/Dealer. The Pennsylvania Treasury Department provides a lower cost of capital to fund the unsecured loan program, resulting in loan rates and terms significantly better than what homeowners can typically obtain for unsecured loans from traditional financing sources. The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency provides the larger secured loan financing, up to 120% of a home's value.

### **Eligible Improvements**

**The Keystone HELP program is for ENERGY STAR rated and other high efficiency and renewable energy improvements.** All work can be financed if at least 65% of the project is comprised of the following:

- ENERGY STAR rated Electric, Gas and Oil (83% AFUE) Heating & Air Conditioning Systems and related work
- ENERGY STAR rated Windows, Doors, Siding, Roofing and Insulation
- Geothermal, Solar Energy & Hot Water & Water Treatment , Small Wind Power Systems
- Home Performance with ENERGY STAR "whole house" improvements and energy audits
- Other Qualifying ENERGY STAR improvements

For further information visit [keystonehelp.com](http://keystonehelp.com) or call (888) 232-3477