

**CONTACTS:**

Eric Dregne, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, 563-588-2700, eric@dbqfoundation.org

David Lyons, Smarter Sustainable Dubuque, 563-564-7232, dlyons@cityofdubuque.org

NEWS RELEASE

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Volunteer Recruitment Underway for Smarter Natural Gas Pilot Study

DUBUQUE, Iowa – Dubuque 2.0 and the City of Dubuque are in the process of recruiting 250 volunteer households for the Smarter Natural Gas Pilot Study, which is being conducted in partnership with Black Hills Energy and IBM Research. Study participants will have access to “smart” technology and will benefit from support and information that could lead to savings of natural gas resources.

The Smarter Natural Gas Pilot Study is the next phase of Smarter Sustainable Dubuque, the City’s partnership with IBM Research. The goal of the partnership is to give people the information and tools they need to make smarter choices on energy consumption in order to reduce their costs and environmental impact.

People interested in participating in the Smarter Natural Gas Pilot Study should contact Dubuque 2.0. A quick phone call to 563-588-2700 or email to info@dubuque2.org will get you signed up as a volunteer. A complete information packet will be sent to households that are interested in the Pilot Study and live in the targeted area of the city of Dubuque.

Dubuque households in the southern portion of the city invited to participate will receive a letter within the next week. This is the same area targeted for the Smarter Water study, currently underway. This geographic area was chosen due to its diversity of residential structures and the data transmission requirements of the technology being used in the study and the infrastructure already in place to support the Smarter Water and Smarter Electricity pilot studies. There is no cost or obligation to Black Hills Energy customers to participate.

The Smarter Natural Gas pilot study will utilize Automated Meter Reading (AMR) units on residential natural gas meters to gather usage information from the 250 volunteer households. The two-year study will enable Black Hills Energy to provide data about gas usage to the City and IBM for research purposes. The data will be anonymous and homeowner-specific data will not be made available.

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IBM will use the data to develop a consumer interface system to enable study participants to better understand their natural gas use so they can consider changes to save resources, reduce costs, and reduce carbon emissions. Volunteers will eventually be able to access their natural gas usage and related data through an interactive website/portal, currently under development by IBM and similar to the portal developed for the Smarter Water study.

Water study participants are currently using the portal to track their household's water usage and have described the experience as interesting and fun. Some participants can even identify particular events in the portal's high-level historical view. That peak on November 25 represents 25 Thanksgiving guests. The giant peak two months ago is cleaning up in the wake of water in the basement. That drop in average usage shows the impact of fixing a single leak. They report the water graphs available on the portal provide a sort of mirror of what was happening in their lives and enjoyed figuring out what was what. Some participants are using the portal just to get a picture of how they use water; others are using the picture as motivation for changing how they use water.

The Smarter Natural Gas Pilot Study helps meet Dubuque's sustainability principle of Smart Energy Use. For additional information on Smarter Sustainable Dubuque, please visit www.sustainabledubuque.org.

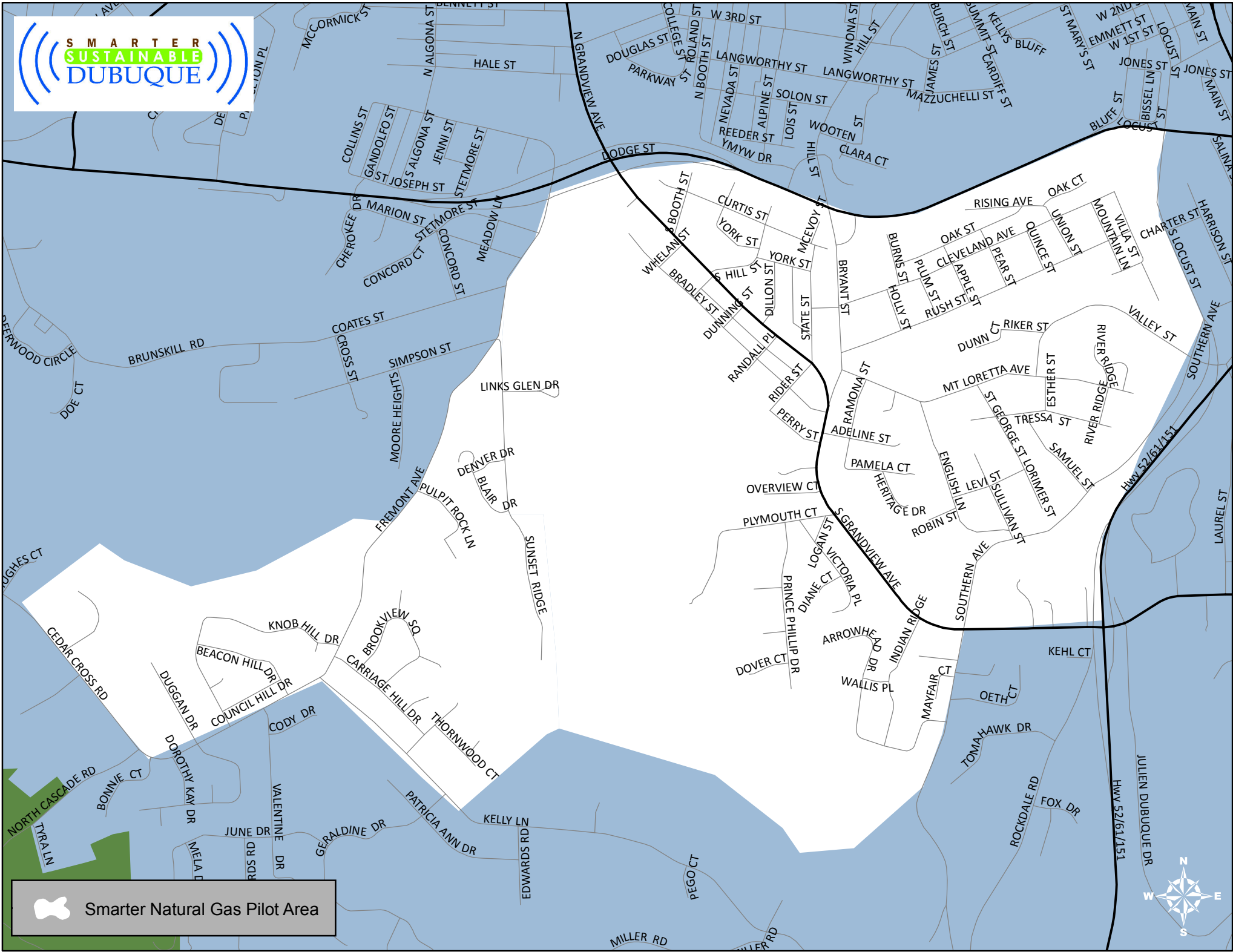



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MAP OF STUDY AREA ATTACHED



Smarter Sustainable Dubuque is a research project of Sustainable Dubuque, a community vision initiated in 2006 to make Dubuque a community that meets the environmental, economic, and social equity needs of its residents today without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. For more information, visit www.sustainabledubuque.org.



 Smarter Natural Gas Pilot Area

