For the first time ever, the Minnesota Department of Commerce has developed a home-sized energy efficiency exhibit for Minnesota State Fairgoers. Whether sorting through home lighting options, searching for the most efficient kitchen and laundry appliances, or assessing your home's overall performance and needed upgrades, the Energy Solutions Home exhibit at the Minnesota State Fair (August 23-Sept. 3) will demonstrate the many ways homeowners can improve the efficiency, comfort, safety, and environmental impact of their home.
The Energy Solutions Home, coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Commerce in cooperation with many exhibitors and partners, promises to help Minnesota homeowners learn how to improve their existing homes through a variety of strategies and options. It is located in about 7,000 square feet at the center of the Eco Experience, on the north end of the fairgrounds in the Progress Center.

"This exhibit is specifically designed to help Minnesota homeowners discover cost-effective ways to improve your home's efficiency and save money," said Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman. "This exhibit is a partnership of state agencies, utilities, builder associations, private contractors, retailers, neighborhood energy groups, finance agencies, and others. Our shared goal is to help educate the public about some of the most prudent approaches to home improvement."

Packed into the exhibit will be a number of displays and attractions:

•• The Home Performance display features an interactive component where fairgoers will answer questions about statewide energy use and discover the environmental impact of the typical Minnesota home. By opening doors, windows and other devices on a model of a home, viewers will learn about their own home and opportunities to improve home performance.

•• A Home Assessment feature examines the best way to ensure that you have considered your options before embarking on home improvement projects. Staffed by home auditors, the display will feature sample audit reports and information on where to get an advanced energy audit.

•• The Home Envelope display provides interactive models of the challenges of a story-and-a-half home, wall and attic insulation examples, window and door retrofitting, advanced deep retrofit insulation options, and attic air leaks and ice dam solutions.

•• A Home Lighting Options display showcases lighting selections for one's home and helps consumers sort through the many new products and options for lighting your home. From brightness to color to efficiency to long life, fairgoers will see that there are many options to meet your lighting needs.

•• The Saving Water area highlights the latest information on low-flow fixtures, faucets, showerheads, and repair and maintenance options for plumbing fixtures.

•• The Green Materials and Efficient Appliances display provides important information about products that have a lower environmental impact. It highlights appliances that can save energy. ENERGY STAR kitchen and laundry appliances, low VOC paints and finishes, and

recycled content cabinetry and counters will be on display.

• A Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) display showcases high efficiency products that can save energy and improve the indoor air quality in your home. It will provide direction on when it is time to replace HVAC equipment and the benefits of investing in efficiency.

•• A Renewables Siting area provides information through a hands-on solar siting display that allows fairgoers to simulate the action of the sun through the day and seasons to help determine if their home has good solar potential. Siting requirements for small wind and ground source heat pumps is also available, as well as information on how to design major renovations and additions to be renewables-ready.

•• A Landscaping feature with mini-gardens demonstrates everything from rain barrels to pollinator gardens to drip irrigation to permeable pavers. Also included will be information about design and siting options for various landscaping features.

•• A Paying For It feature offers information on financing and loan programs to pay for home improvement projects. It will feature an interactive link to a website (www.dsireusa.org) that lists all the available incentives and rebates for homeowners.

•• A Sustainability Stage that provides a venue for presentations for the entire Eco Experience Building.

The Energy Solutions Home is part of the Eco Experience, the largest environmental event of its kind in the country with more than 25,000 square feet of interactive experiences. For more information on the Energy Solutions Home and for a complete description of the exhibits and the partners for each, visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce website or the Eco Experience website. The Eco Experience website includes a calendar of daily events and presentations for the entire Eco Experience. A Minnesota State Fair App also serves as a complete guide to the Minnesota State Fair.