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TEXAS ENERGY POVERTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO DEBUT

AUSTIN, Texas. -- The Texas Energy Poverty Research Institute (TEPRI), a diverse collaborative comprised of utilities, low-income and energy efficiency advocates, banking, and solar experts is launching today. The non-profit organization is focused on research projects and demonstration programs that will result in actionable data to help energy companies impact their low-income customers in smarter, more cost-effective ways.

TEPRI has specific objectives to address the growing energy-poverty nexus in Texas, including to:

- Identify vital behaviors that lead to home energy cost savings;
- Evaluate affordable clean energy opportunities for low-income households;
- Coordinate diverse players to focus on innovations for low-income efficiency;
- Provide analytics on aggregated energy consumption patterns;
- Implement studies to help inform capital allocations; and
- Connect stakeholders to external data for value discovery.

Currently, TEPRI's members include Oncor, the State's largest transmission and distribution utility; CPS Energy, the largest municipal utility in the nation; El Paso Electric Company, a multi-state utility; CenterPoint Energy, a large transmission, distribution and gas services utility; PowerFin Partners, a Texas based solar provider; City Lights Group, a economic development and bank financing consulting company; The South-Central Partnership for Energy Efficiency as a Resource (SPEER); and The Texas Association of Community Action Agencies (TACAA). TEPRI looks forward to working with academia, foundations, other research institutions, and government in furthering its goals.

In Texas today, approximately 37% of households live below 200% of the federal poverty guideline. That is less than \$47,000 per year for a family of four. Low-income households in some parts of Texas pay 12-28% of their gross monthly income on home energy costs compared to 4% for the average household. Meanwhile, federal dollars for weatherization and heating assistance are dwindling and our State low-income fund that helps eligible households pay for high electric bills during the summer has been decommissioned. Given demographic forecasts for Texas over the next 20 years, this picture will only get worse. That's why industry stakeholders have begun to coalesce in order to work smarter on behalf of this customer segment.

To learn more about TEPRI's mission, leadership, and specific goals for 2016, please visit: www.txenergypoverty.org. You can also safely sign up for membership on the website.

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