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**Duluth Sister Cities International wins *Sister Cities International's*
Innovation: Energy Award**

WASHINGTON, DC – Duluth Sister Cities International's has won *Sister Cities International's* 2011 Innovation: Energy Award for a city with a population under 100,000. The award recognizes the achievements of sister city programs and their leaders who have championed cooperation on energy issues and projects at the municipal level.

Duluth Sister Cities International won the award for its "Climate Idol Project" that aims to demonstrate to the community that by changing simple, everyday habits, people in the community can live a more environmentally sustainable life. The project tasks four families with reducing their carbon footprint through four challenges: lowering energy consumption, reducing gasoline consumption, increasing awareness on the environmental impact of foods we eat, and changing certain lifestyle and recreation habits. Each challenge requires the participants to undertake various environmentally friendly and sustainable activities.

The idea for the project was inspired after a 2009 Duluth delegation's visit to sister city Växjö, Sweden, named the Greenest City in Europe in 2007, to learn about sustainability practices. During the visit the delegation learned about Växjö's sustainability project "Climate Pilots."

The Climate Idols Project, conducted in collaboration with the municipality and many local businesses, engaged the entire community through the experiences of four families. Duluth Sister Cities International now plans to expand the project to involve university campuses.

The Innovation: Energy award is supported by the U.S. Department of Energy. The *Sister Cities International* Annual Awards are awarded in several categories. Award winners will be honored at a special luncheon ceremony on July 14 during the *Sister Cities International* 56th Annual Conference in Jacksonville, Florida.

About *Sister Cities International*:

Sister Cities International facilitates nearly 2,000 partnerships in 136 countries on six continents between 600 communities in the United States with similar municipalities abroad. *Sister Cities International* represents citizen diplomats who work tirelessly to promote the organizations' mission of creating world peace and cultural understanding through economic and sustainable development programs, youth and education projects, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

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