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Conference on Sustainable Building to be Held in Tipperary Institute

4th March 2010

County Tipperary's leading role in addressing the problem of sustainable energy and climate change will again be highlighted by the hosting a conference on the topic of sustainable building. The conference 'Retrofitting and New Build in the New Environment' will be held on the 23rd of April.

The conference is being organised as part of the EU SERVE Project which Tipperary Institute is coordinating. Linked to the event on the 22nd of April will be site visits to the eco-village in Cloughjordan and to houses which have had energy efficiency retrofits completed as part of the SERVE project. People will get the opportunity to see how houses can be upgraded, the associated technical issues and demonstrations of the eco-houses within the eco-village.

Seamus Hoyne, the SERVE Project Coordinator stated "The SERVE project has completed two years of work so far. Its aim is to complete energy upgrades to over 400 buildings and assist the development of the eco-village in Cloughjordan. The environment in which this project was first envisaged has changed dramatically. This includes not only the financial crisis which has so dramatically affected the construction sector but also the new National priority on the retrofitting of houses, new building regulations for new buildings and the Building Energy Rating process which is now firmly established in the market. This event seeks to combine the practical aspects of site visits to relevant SERVE supported activities with presentations by a panel of expert speakers on energy in buildings".

The panel includes representatives from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government on new buildings standards and the Department of Communications Energy and Natural Resources on the National Retrofitting Programme. Industry experts such as Joseph Little from Joseph Little Architects, Jay Stewarts from DWME and Patrick Daly will make presentations on Insulation Upgrades, Ventilation Options for Retrofitting and Achieving a Zero Carbon Home respectively. The full programme and registration form is available at www.servecommunity.ie

Michael O'Connell, Acting Chief Executive of Tipperary Institute noted 'The Institute has been committed to the area of sustainable energy from its inception. A team of specialists from the Institute have been delivering education and training in this area for nearly ten years and have already completed a range of important research and development projects. The fact that TI is coordinating the multi-million SERVE project is an indication of our expertise and our commitment to making Tipperary a leader in terms of sustainable energy development. This event provides an opportunity for people to see first hand the impact this project is having in the County.'

The eco-village in CloghJordan is a unique demonstration of how a new housing development can achieve high environmental standard. Involving 132 energy efficient homes heated by a district heating system using wood and solar energy the project is demonstrating leading edge technologies and innovative approaches to development.

“We are delighted to be part of the SERVE project and that the creation of our eco-village is leading to immediate practical benefits for the people of North Tipperary,” said Gregg Allen, General Manager and member of the eco-village development company, Sustainable Projects Ireland Ltd. “House construction started last summer and we now have residents living in the eco-village. We aim to be a showcase for other people and communities so that they can see that these achievements are possible”.

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Further information:

SERVE Project

The Sustainable Energy in Rural Village Environments (SERVE) project demonstrates sustainable energy use in rural communities. Energy upgrade work is led by the North Tipperary County Council (NTCC) and new build by the not-for-profit CloughJordan eco-village, Sustainable Projects Ireland Ltd (SPIL).

The SERVE Project has secured €1.1m in grant aid from the EU CONCERTO Programme to:

- Complete energy efficiency upgrades on 500 buildings between 2008 and 2010.
- Support the development of the eco-village in CloghJordan including installing a renewable energy district heating system using biomass and solar
- Install 400 renewable energy heating systems in the region
- Complete promotion, education and training in the region

The SERVE consortium teams local actors with EU experts, to facilitate technology transfer and ensure best practice. SERVE may be the first such program targeted at rural areas. It would be widely replicable across the EU.

The SERVE Project is supported under the EU Concerto programme which is funded by the EU Commission under the Framework 6 programme.

Tipperary Institute

Tipperary Institute is an integrated education and development institute established by the Irish Government. The institute links education, community and business within the context of sustainable rural development. It began operation in 1997 and opened to students in September 1999. It has campus buildings in two towns (Thurles and Clonmel). 700 students attend the institute, undertaking Certificate and Degree courses in sustainable rural development, renewable energy, business, social studies, environmental management, creative multimedia and computing.

There is an institute-wide commitment to the principles of sustainability, partnership, inclusion and innovation. Tipperary Institute's first project in the sustainable energy sector commenced in late 1996. The Institute's Centre for Sustainable Energy Development "Amergin" was established in 2002, to provide a focus for the Institute's work on the topic. Amergin is a cross-departmental structure, involving staff from the Rural Development Department and the Information and Communications Technology Department. It is also linked to the Tipperary Energy Agency.