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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Center for Energy and Environment Awards Grant to Encourage Girls to Excel in Math

\$6,500 Initial Gift Targets 5th-7th Grade Girls

MINNEAPOLIS - May 26, 2005 – The Minneapolis-based Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) has issued a \$6,500 initial grant to the University of Minnesota Institute of Technology Center for Educational Programs (ITCEP), specifically targeted to encourage young girls to study and achieve in math.

The grant, the first ever issued by the nonprofit CEE, will be used to support a group of 40-60 5th-7th grade girls in several target school districts to pursue the study of mathematics. Students and their teachers will attend workshops, designed to appeal to young girls aged 10 – 12, in fall and winter 2005 and participate in the ITCEP Family Fun Fair in March 2006. Participating public school districts will include Anoka-Hennepin, Forest Lake, Robbinsdale, and White Bear Lake, as well as the St. Paul Charter School, Higher Ground Academy.

“Young girls are consistently under-represented in accelerated math programs,” said Sheldon Strom, CEE executive director. “We hope this initial grant will become the first phase of a long-range partnership with ITCEP to help train teachers as they work to change the perception of math education and science careers among girls and young women.” ITCEP reports that only 25 to 34 percent of the students participating in its programs in 2003-2004 were girls.

“There is a clearly identified need,” said Cathy Polasky, CEE board member, whose daughters have participated in ITCEP programs. “The way to attract more girls

to these programs is to involve and support the teachers." CEE's initial grant to ITCEP will go toward helping one teacher and 8-12 girls from each of the identified districts to participate in the 2005-2006 ITCEP activities.

ITCEP has been working with various metro-area school districts for the last three years to strengthening upper elementary and middle school teacher knowledge of the major underlying mathematical ideas and their connections to the Minnesota Academic Standards. These efforts have been in response to results of surveys of metro-area elementary school teachers. Many elementary school teachers do not feel sufficiently confident teaching all of the mathematics in a good elementary curriculum. To deepen teacher content knowledge and empower them to feel more confident teaching mathematics, ITCEP developed a professional development program that includes carefully designed summer mathematics courses and a series of academic year opportunities for a network of teachers who have completed these courses. Highly qualified and professionally supported elementary teachers can play significant roles in improving all students' understanding of math and their subsequent achievement.

Information about how to participate in the ITCEP programs is available at the ITCEP web site: www.itcep.umn.edu.

Center for Energy and Environment is a nonprofit organization based in Minneapolis. CEE was established in 1979 and is the leading nonprofit resource on energy efficiency and financing opportunities in the state.

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