

Freer Auto Body Receives \$125K Energy Grant

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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GODFREY - On Monday, March 25, 2024, Freer Auto Body welcomed Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski and Godfrey Mayor Mike McCormick as the business received a \$125,000 Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grant.

REAP, a program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, offers grants to small businesses to make energy efficiency improvements. Freer Auto Body owner Tim Freer explained that their power bill recently increased almost \$4,000. In response, the business installed solar panels on their roof. He said the grant will provide “long-term relief” for the business’s energy costs.

“There’s 219 panels. That’s a 91 KW system. It's supposed to produce 115% of what our needs actually are,” Freer added.

Budzinski has announced that ten small businesses in Madison and Macoupin Counties will receive over \$1.8 million in REAP funding. The goal is to minimize energy costs while promoting energy efficiency in rural communities.

“It makes a real difference in energy costs, which is a real problem,” Budzinski said. “That’s honestly been my number one priority since getting into office, making sure central and Southern Illinois were getting our fair share of the federal dollars. It’s about time. And I do think that these kind of grant opportunities really make a difference in any small business...It just creates more energy efficiency, saving money. That’s what it’s all about is trying to help people save money, small businesses save money.”

Budzinski added that she is also trying to increase accessibility to these grants by assisting small businesses and communities in the grant application process. For more information, visit Budzinski.House.gov.

McCormick added that Freer Auto Body gives back to the community and has been a strong business in Godfrey over the past 30 years.

“They made a nice living here, but they give back, and that’s very important,” McCormick said. “It’s an American, family-owned business that’s been great in many, many ways to the Village of Godfrey.”

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