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MEDIA CONTACT: Catherine Elvert, Utilities Communications Manager

(650) 329-2417, Catherine.Elvert@CityofPaloAlto.org

Palo Alto Advances in \$5 million Georgetown University Energy Prize

Palo Alto among select number of communities across the nation leading the way on energy efficiency

Palo Alto, CA – January 14, 2015 – The City of Palo Alto has officially advanced to the semifinal round of the Georgetown University Energy Prize, a national \$5 million prize competition designed to help American communities rethink the way they use energy. The Georgetown competition challenges cities and counties across the U.S. to compete for energy savings using innovative strategies. At a press event in Washington, D.C. today, Palo Alto was announced as one of the 50 communities who are leading the way on energy efficiency.

“The City of Palo Alto has a long history of supporting energy efficiency and we will continue to offer innovative programs to drive savings,” said City Manager James Keene. “The Georgetown Prize creates a unique opportunity for community members to share their energy-saving ideas with us and pledge to join the City as a whole to win in this friendly competition. We are hoping to achieve an additional 10% energy savings on top of our current efficiency goals.”

The City of Palo Alto’s Utilities Department offers a robust suite of energy efficiency programs for residents, schools, businesses and government facilities. This year, the utility is launching a number of new programs including enhanced home energy audits and the chance to participate in a large, solar bulk purchase program. These programs aid Palo Alto in meeting the Georgetown Prize criteria, which consist of achieving not just energy savings - something Palo Alto has been actively pursuing for over 30 years - but also program innovation, potential for replication, future performance, equitable access, education and overall quality of services. The City’s goal is to maximize energy efficiency throughout the community and City operations to reduce overall demand, educate customers about energy efficiency, assist with utility cost savings, encourage local renewable energy generation and move closer toward achieving climate protection goals.

“City Manager Keene, as well as mayors and executives across the country, have told us that this Prize gives them the momentum to accelerate their energy efficiency efforts,” said Dr. Francis Slakey, founder and executive director of the Georgetown University Energy Prize. Slakey continued, “These semifinalist communities are leading the way for other small and medium-sized cities and counties to secure their energy efficient future.”

“Palo Alto is the birthplace of Silicon Valley and zip code of innovation,” said Keene. “Participation in the Georgetown competition is just one more way we are demonstrating leadership for environmental sustainability and engaging the whole community to help us achieve our climate protection goals.”

Palo Alto joins five communities from the San Francisco Bay Area in this friendly competition. Sunnyvale, San Mateo, Fremont, Berkeley and Davis have all thrown their hat into the ring with the backing of PG&E. Palo Alto Utilities has established goals for improving energy efficiency through a number of long-term plans, including a Ten-Year Energy Efficiency Plan, Long-Term Electric Acquisition Plan (LEAP) and Gas Long-Term Utility Plan (GULP). It is also guided by the City's 2007 adoption of a Climate Protection Plan, which set aggressive goals for greenhouse gas emission reductions, with a focus on efficiency measures to lower demand and renewable energy options to reduce the City's carbon footprint.

"The competition looks truly like America," said Slakey. "Not only do these communities come from across the map, they represent the nation's full political, social and economic diversity. Some are paying the highest prices for energy, some have the ambition to be carbon net-zero, but all communities share the goal of transforming America's energy future."

The City invites the community to get involved with Palo Alto's energy efficiency initiatives and help our community win the Georgetown competition. Visit us online to join in and learn more about the City of Palo Alto Utilities' efforts at cityofpaloalto.org/Georgetown. Share your energy-saving ideas with us, print a personal energy pledge certificate and take advantage of available resources.

To follow the Georgetown University Energy Prize and track the competition progress, visit www.guep.org, follow the Prize on Twitter @GUEnergyPrize or Facebook at facebook.com/guenergyprize

About the City of Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU): The City of Palo Alto is the only municipality in California operating a full suite of utility services. In 1896, two Stanford University professors, Charles Marx and Charles Benjamin Wing contended that the City could provide multiple utilities at rates significantly below those being charged by private companies. They were responsible for adding electric power (1900) to the city's new water (1896) and sewer (1898) utility systems. A founding principle of those early pioneers was that such services must benefit the community. That principle continues to this day, with the electric and natural gas (1917) utilities returning millions of dollars for public safety (Police, Fire, and Emergency Services), a network of public libraries, and 4,200 acres of parks and open space areas. In 1996, Palo Alto, the "birthplace of Silicon Valley," expanded its CPAU service by adding the commercial Fiber Optic "dark fiber" utility. These investments and their long-term financial returns to the local community support Palo Alto as a unique place to live and work. For more information, visit www.cityofpaloalto.org/utilities

About Georgetown University Energy Prize

The \$5 million Georgetown University Energy Prize challenges small- to medium-size towns, cities, and counties to rethink their energy use, and implement creative strategies to increase efficiency. To compete for the Prize, local governments, residents, utilities, and others will need to work together to demonstrate success in sustainably reducing energy consumption over a two-year period. For more information, visit www.guep.org.

Georgetown University Energy Prize Competition Contact:

Christofer Nelson, 202-642-2061
christofer.nelson@georgetown.edu