

Contest seeks world's most energy-efficient TV

Ayesha Rascoe, Reuters

A competition to identify the world's most energy efficient flat screen televisions will kick off on Friday, with the U.S. Energy Department and other governments sponsoring a race to cut down on home electricity use.

The contest, part of an international initiative to promote "super-efficient" products, will award up to 20 Global Efficiency Medals to the most efficient televisions from four different regions: Australia, the European Union, India and North America.

Organizers say building more efficient appliances can ultimately save enough energy to avoid the need to build new power plants. Televisions comprise 6 percent to 8 percent of global residential electricity consumption.

Rick Duke, deputy assistant secretary for climate policy at the Energy Department, said the program will complement national programs like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program to label products meeting power-saving guidelines.

"In an area like television ... it can be hard to keep up with standards and even label programs because the evolution of the technology is so fast," Duke told Reuters on Thursday.

Instead of setting minimum standards that products must meet, the competition will recognize the top power-saving televisions in three different size categories.

Duke said the competition will "help to drive even faster performance gains."

The efficiency initiative is a part of the Clean Energy Ministerial, a global forum launched by the Energy Department and other governments in July 2010 to promote clean energy technology.

Eventually the group hopes to hold similar contests for other appliance categories. In addition to the competitions, the group is also working to help developing nations come up with appliance standards.

"The potential is really tremendous," Duke said. "We estimate that hundreds, if not over 1,000 mid-size power plants could be avoided globally over the next couple of decades through appliance policy more broadly."

The Obama administration has made advancing renewable energy and energy efficiency a top policy priority, as part of its efforts to address climate change and revitalize the economy.

(Editing by David Gregorio)

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