

Energy-Efficiency Programs That Really Work

By Michael W. Kahn

New Hampshire Electric Co-op says its energy-efficiency programs work—and it has the numbers to prove it.

“We believe we’ve saved over 294 million lifetime kilowatt-hours through our calculations,” from June 2002 through December 2007, said Ray Gosney, executive vice president of the co-op. “And we’ve saved our members about \$45 million” that they would have paid for energy now no longer needed.

“It does pay benefits when you step up and provide support for your members,” Gosney said during Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives’ Sept. 30 Web conference, “Energy Efficiency Success Stories.”

The Plymouth-based co-op and the Granite State’s four investor-owned utilities have partnered to administer what is known as the Core Energy Efficiency Programs.

Funded through a charge on electric bills statewide, homeowners can take advantage of five programs offering such benefits as insulation and appliance upgrades. Businesses have three programs to choose from, with benefits including incentives to install energy-efficient equipment.

At South Carolina’s largest electric co-op, one energy efficiency program dates back to the early 1980s. That’s how long Berkeley Electric Cooperative, Moncks Corner, has been giving hot water heater rebates—currently \$300—in exchange for load control. The result has been a big savings on wholesale power costs, according to Eddie McKnight, Berkeley Electric’s vice president of marketing and public

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S CORE ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

- Portfolio of programs to improve efficiency
 - 5 designed for residential customers
 - 3 targeted to business customers
- Statewide—all NH customers have access
- Administered by partnership of the Co-op and three NH IOUs

NEW HAMPSHIRE ELECTRIC CO-OP

relations.

Berkeley Electric also offers its Good Cents program, in which owners of new or renovated homes that meet certain standards receive discounted rates.

Additionally, the co-op has partnered with a local bank to make Energy Advance Loans for improvements such as heat pumps and insulation.

“We go out and do an audit, if needed, and tell them what they need,” McKnight told Web conference participants. “And then we follow the whole process all the way through” to a final inspection.

“It gives consumers comfort that somebody is looking over a contractor’s shoulder,” he added, “and being sure that the work done in their home is done properly.”

The co-op also has an electric vehicle charging rate.

“Not very many takers on that yet,” McKnight said. “But I think we’ll all see that changing very soon.” □