BPA Announces Behavior-Based Energy Efficiency Pilot With NW Power

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : July 6, 2012 at 4:18 am

Portland, OR - The Bonneville Power Administration and a group of Northwest public utilities are teaming up to find ou

BPA has awarded cooperative agreements for future work on behavior-based energy efficiency pilot projects to Snohomish County Public Utility District, Cowlitz Public Utility District and Clark Public Utilities. The three public utilities were selected after a competitive process conducted by BPA."This is another example of how BPA and Northwest public utilities are working together to find new ways for Northwest residents and businesses to save energy and reduce their utility bills," said Karen Meadows, acting vice president of Energy Efficiency. "We commend these utilities for venturing into this relatively new potential source of energy savings and energy efficiency awareness. We’re eager to see the results."Unlike traditional energy-efficiency measures that focus on the adoption of technologies such as energy-efficient appliances and lighting to save energy, behavior-based programs achieve energy savings through changes in individual or organizational behavior and decision-making.Waste management, healthcare and transportation industries have been applying behavior-based approaches for years, while utilities and others in the energy industry have only recently began using them as a means for encouraging energy savings.

"Science helps us to understand behavior change. So we’re excited to learn what strategies and tactics will motivate consumers and organizations to change their energy use habits," adds Summer Goodwin, BPA behavior-based energy efficiency program lead.The behavior-based energy efficiency pilots are a step toward the development of infrastructure and policies that Northwest public utilities can use to operate behavior-based energy efficiency programs in residential, commercial and industrial sectors.The Snohomish County Public Utility District’s pilot project is a collaboration between Snohomish County Public Utility District, PECI, Lucid, Puget Sound Energy and Starbucks. The program gathers real time energy use data and provides access to information via a web-based portal. Employees will be encouraged to engage in the pilot by facilitating an intra-store energy-saving competition.Clark Public Utilities’ innovative behavior-based pilot aims to reinvent how electric utility customers interact with their utility by providing energy use feedback to residential users and integrating with the popular social media tool, Facebook.Cowlitz Public Utility District’s pilot uses digital media, such as email and text messaging, in addition to frequent energy reports, to encourage energy efficiency and by residential end users.Both Clark and Cowlitz are partnering with OPower.

BPA has committed up to $300,000 in funding per year. First phase results from the behavior-based energy efficiency pilots are expected in 2013.*BPA is a non-profit federal agency that markets renewable hydropower from federal Columbia River dams, operates three-quarters of high-voltage transmission lines in the Northwest and funds one of the largest wildlife protection and restoration programs in the world. BPA and its partners have also saved enough electricity through energy efficiency projects to power four large American cities. For more information, contact us at 503-230-5131 or visit www.bpa.gov.*