

Project 1

Enhancing EERE program impact by increasing the working relationships between NASULGC regional associations and EERE regional offices

Primary Contact

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The Pacific Northwest Extension Energy Initiative – Phase I

Project Overview

To date, U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) has delivered much of its programming through six Regional Offices and its State Energy Offices. The land-grant college system administers outreach and education programs through its well-developed Cooperative Extension Services, which has offices and technical staff in all U.S. counties. During 2004, several NASULGC institutions piloted a program using the capacities of the Extension system to deliver selected services of EERE - services for which delivery could take advantage of the wide and similar distribution of Cooperative Extension Offices. One of the conclusions reached as a result of the pilot projects was that there was significant value to be gained by involving the Cooperative Extension System in delivery of EERE information. More effective use of the Extension system can be made if there are well-developed connections between the regional Extension associations and those involved in deployment within EERE.

Our ultimate goal is to facilitate continuing interactions and dialog between the respective staff of Regional Associations of NASLUGC institutions, EERE Program Managers, EERE Regional Energy Offices, and the state energy offices. The Cooperative Extension System has a long standing culture of working collaboratively to provide education to meet the need of stakeholders. To effectively use the Extension networking, outreach and education capabilities, strong relationships must be forged with regular communications between the DOE-EERE staff and the staff in the Regional Extension Associations.

Project Goal

Short term – To provide Pacific Northwest Extension employees and their constituents with access to energy resources

Long term – To achieve cost savings through diffusion of innovation

Project Focus

Energy efficiency and renewable energy

Project Plan

The Extension outreach and education capabilities will be used to facilitate adoption of EERE technologies and practices by citizens in the Pacific Northwest (Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and Alaska), a subset of the Western Region. The Pacific Northwest provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate the value the Extension System can bring to support the EERE deployment strategies. This four-state region has a history of collaboration on Extension/outreach activities and substantial renewable energy resources – particularly wind, biomass, solar and geothermal resources.

The Washington State University (WSU) Extension Energy Program will provide an important role in this project. The WSU Extension Energy Program's experience and expertise, coupled with its links to the Extension system, as well as its role as manager and operator of the national EERE Information Center, can facilitate implementation throughout the region and the broader Extension network.

Project Tasks

Coordination and Oversight

An implementation team consisting of Extension officials from each of the four Pacific Northwest states will participate as advisors. A representative from the Western Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Energy will also provide guidance. This group will hold at least one face-to-face meeting and will provide advice about the best methods to engage Extension personnel in the four states. Representatives of NASULGC and the U.S. Department of Energy will be updated on the progress of the project.

Curriculum Development

It is expected that the project will not need to develop new materials, but will use those currently available through the EERE Information Center. A letter will be drafted and sent to the Extension County Directors in the region notifying them of training opportunities. In addition, a one-page targeted description of the pilot project will be developed.

Extension Outreach

Four trainings will be held – one in each state of the region for County Extension Directors and other selected staff members. The aim is to expose them to the experts, the one-stop resource available to them and to educate them about how to best take advantage of this resource – the resource being the EERE Information Center, which is managed and operated by the WSU Extension Energy Program.

The primary target audience for Phase I of this project is local and county governments including schools, boroughs, cities, tribes and local utilities.

The project's focus is energy efficiency and renewable energy.

The trainings will help Extension Directors train staff to work better and more effectively with this audience on energy issues.

Secondary audiences for Phase II might include food processors and wood materials manufacturers, residential customers and agriculture.

Educational Support to Extension Agents

WSU Extension Energy Program staff will provide training to Extension agents through the four trainings for County Extension Directors.

Each Extension Director will be encouraged to meet their state Energy Department Director to talk about this project and seek ways to work together in the future.

The WSU Extension Energy Program will provide technical assistance/consultations for clients of Extension in the Pacific Northwest through the existing EERE IC service, in particular for the primary target audience.

These consultations would not be offered otherwise, and are over and above, and complementary to, what is currently offered through the EERE Information Center. The budget for this project is estimated to be enough to cover 180 typical advanced-level technical requests/consultations with WSU Extension Energy Program Tier 2 and 3 technical experts.

Summary of Deliverables

- Preparation and delivery of four in-state trainings to Extension Directors
- Operational adjustments and staff training for the areas of inquiry intake, disposition, technical consultations, and record-keeping
- Technical assistance (including mailings of materials) for approximately 180 inquiries from target audience

- Quarterly report on activities

Project Results

We may not expect outcomes in the Phase I of this pilot project, but instead – outputs.

Success metrics can be the number of contacts and the number of documents delivered. Roughly 50 percent of inquires of the EERE Information Center result in action/behavior change, but it would take follow-up to know the action taken (perhaps in Phase II of the project).

Project Schedule

The pilot project will commence September 2005.

- **September 05-November 05**

Targeted trainings and accompanying materials will be developed

- **October 05-April 06**

The four regional trainings for County Extension Directors will be conducted – one in each state, EERE Information Center answers and tracks inquiries

- **April 06- September 06**

EERE Information Center answers and tracks inquiries, project success assessed – are there examples of members from the target audience that were influenced to adopt new practices, project presented at NACO regional meeting in May

Project Coordination

The WSU Extension Energy Program will develop and deliver training curriculum, conduct the one-day trainings and work with other members of the implementation team to determine when and where the trainings should be held.

Project Metrics

Information to indicate project success includes:

- Participant surveys at the conclusion of each training to determine if the training increased knowledge of EERE topics
- Number of Extension staff trained in the region and number who met with local government leaders
- Number of contacts/training they conducted and how many attended
- Number that contacted the EERE Information Center of those who attended trainings