

Letter from the AESP Chair

On Coming "Clean"



John Hargrove
NV Energy

Contrary to what you might think, this is not an article about confessing my sins (sorry to disappoint you). But the subject that I'm writing about is much more interesting, I promise. We're talking about clean energy, folks!

While I am an energy efficiency guy through and through (ask me sometime about the moment I decided to get into this business), recent headlines coming in from the world of renewables have both inspired me and provided validation for all the hard work we have done so far to advance solar and wind power in this country.

Last November, Denmark announced its ambitious goal to be 100 percent powered by renewable energy by 2050. While this will not make Denmark the first country to be 100

percent run on clean energy (Norway and Iceland hold that honor) it will be a significant achievement for a country that is presently 44 percent dependent on coal. Denmark plans to phase out its coal- and oil-fired plants by 2030.

While the United States is not about to make a commitment as ambitious as Denmark's, nonetheless, we can be proud of the big strides we have made despite the challenges of being the world's biggest consumer of energy. Our progress is notable both on a national and international scale.

A recent Ernst & Young "Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index" placed the U.S. in second place globally in its progress toward clean energy. The U.S. increased its score by two points over the previous year, due in large part to our heavy commitment to solar and wind technology. In another Ernst & Young report, this one ranking the states in the union, I was encouraged to see new states emerging to the forefront. My neighbors to the east, New Mexico and Colorado came in second and third respectively in the "United States Renewable Attractiveness Indices" thanks to their consistent growth and potential in developing renewable sources of energy. Not surprisingly, my large neighbor to the west, California, was ranked first.

The federal government and state commissions are hugely responsible for the push toward developing clean energy, but it should not be their job alone. A report from the Civil Society Institute/Synapse claims that by continuing on our present course, the result would be a total savings of \$83 billion over the next 40 years. Furthermore, carbon dioxide emissions produced from power generation will be reduced by 80 percent by 2050.

MAY 2012

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Upcoming Events

Brown Bags

May 31
[The Elephant in the Residential Program Designers Room: Set-Top Boxes](#)

If you would like to organize a Brown Bag, please contact Kisha Gresham at kisha@aesp.org.

Chapter Events

May 16 — National Chapter, Breakfast Meeting at AESP's Spring Conference

May 16 — Mid-Atlantic Chapter, Lunch Meeting at AESP's Spring Conference

May 24 — [Chicago Chapter, Event with Guest Speaker](#)

AESP Training Courses

[Overview of the Principles of Demand-side Management](#)
May 15, 2012, Baltimore

[Strategic Marketing of Your EE Programs](#)
May 17-18, 2012, Baltimore

If you would like to schedule an onsite training please contact Suzanne Jones at (480) 704-5900 or suzanne@aesp.org. For more information about the AESP Institute, [click here](#).

So, along with energy efficiency, we, ourselves, you and I, should want to pursue clean energy.

We certainly are here in Nevada. And who knows, maybe one day, we will have more clean energy than that big neighbor of mine. On a final note, don't forget to register for AESP's Spring Conference. I'll see you this May 15-17 in Baltimore!

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Industry News

"Energy Efficiency: This Little Light of Mine"

"U.S. Department of Energy Offers \$100,000 for Cool Apps"

"States Seek to Ease Financing for Energy Efficient Upgrades"

"Apple Plans Nation's Biggest Fuel Cell Energy Project at North Carolina Data Center"

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Part 1: Facebook & Twitter

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Industry News

The following executive summaries of current news items were written for Strategies after being compiled from various news sources.

Energy Efficiency: This Little Light of Mine

Economist (04/01/12)

The business of saving energy is gaining more interest from investors, who cite the example of Oklahoma Gas & Electric to explain the attraction. In 2009, when America's shale-gas boom was starting and Congress was considering a cap-and-trade scheme that would have had a negative effect on coal, the utility found itself in a bind. It needed to meet increasing demand from a growing population but did not want to spend a billion dollars on a new power station in such an uncertain climate. It put that decision off until 2020 and decided to pursue energy conservation instead to bridge the gap. The results have been impressive; by the end of 2012, nearly every household in Oklahoma will have been fitted with a smart meter that communicates with the utility. Smart meters provide consumers with more information about usage and allow utilities to experiment with dynamic pricing, making Oklahoma a leader in the booming business of energy efficiency. According to a 2009 study by the McKinsey consulting firm, a major effort to implement efficiency measures could slash America's energy demand by 25 percent, saving some \$1.2 trillion by 2020. However, such an effort would cost more than \$520 billion, according to McKinsey, making it an unlikely occurrence. However, getting just part of the way there with schemes like those in Oklahoma helps, and investors have noticed. In 2011, according to an annual review by the consulting firm PwC, there were 82 mergers, acquisitions, and other deals in the

Conferences

May 15-17, 2012

AESP's Spring Conference
Marketing & Implementation: Create.
Develop. Implement.
Hilton Baltimore, MD

July 30-31, 2012

AESP's Summer Conference
Exploring the Next Generation of EE
programs — a North American
perspective
Toronto Marriott, ON, Canada

October 15-17, 2012

AESP's Fall Conference
Evaluation & Implementation: No
Longer an Odd Couple.
Westin Long Beach, CA

WELCOME & THANK YOU to our New and Renewing Members!

New Individual Members

Andie Baker, Research into Action
Ayelet Cohen, Conservation Services
Group
Ben Burdick, DC Sustainable Energy
Utility (DCSEU)/Vermont Energy
Investment Corporation
Ben Greenberg, RISE Engineering
Brad Gunter, Florida Power & Light
Brandon Rose, Clean Markets
Brent Hendrickson, Nexant
Brian Kurtz, LIPA
Catalina Lamadrid, Shaw
Environmental
Chad Campbell, Santee Cooper
Chris Berumen, Toshiba
Chris Kramer, Energy Futures Group,
Inc.
Chris Neme, Energy Futures Group,
Inc.
Christine Johnson, Constellation
Energy
Christine Caruso, LIPA
Connie Miller, PPL Electric Utilities
Ellen Lutz, Clean Markets
Emily Fraser, CLEARResult
Erin Ferguson, AM Conservation
Gabe Munoz, Entergy Arkansas
Gerardo Galdamez, Entergy Arkansas
Heather Halstead, EnerPath
Heidi McBride, Advanced Energy
Jack Davis, JDM Associates
Jason DeWitt, SmartWatt Energy
Jeff Van Ess, Corix Utilities
Jeremy Champlin, Entergy Arkansas
Jeromy Cotton, TVA

energy efficiency business worldwide worth \$10 billion, compared to \$3.7 billion in 2010. North America alone accounted for 42 deals worth about \$3 billion.

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U.S. Department of Energy Offers \$100,000 for Cool Apps

Network World (03/23/12) Cooney, Michael

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) wants to support the development of applications that can help businesses and consumers use less energy and save money. DOE launched the Apps for Energy Challenge and is accepting ideas for apps at apps@hq.doe.gov. The agency will feature the best ideas on Energy.gov, and the ideas will serve as an inspiration for software developers who are participating in the competition. The department released the official rules for Apps for Energy on April 5, when it will begin accepting submissions, which can be any kind of software app for the Web, personal computers, mobile devices, or any software broadly available to the public. Utility data from American Electric Power, Austin Energy, Baltimore Gas and Electric, CenterPoint Energy, Commonwealth Edison, NSTAR, PECO, Reliant, and Virginia Dominion Power can be used to develop the apps. DOE will accept app design submissions until May 15, then it will conduct an internal review and hold a public vote. The agency will announce the winners, who will receive \$100,000 in cash prizes, in late May.

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States Seek to Ease Financing for Energy Efficient Upgrades

Stateline.org (04/12/12) Malewitz, Jim

A new loan program in the state of New York has sparked optimism that homeowners will be able to make efficiency upgrades to reduce energy costs, easing their burden on all residents, especially those living in the state's less-affluent households. The "on-bill financing" program allows homeowners to pay for upgrades with money saved by reduced energy use that can be measured on each utility bill. The state-backed loans feature no upfront costs, monthly payments designed to be no larger than projected savings, and an interest rate of less than 3 percent. The program, fueled by revenue New York gains from trading carbon under the nine-state Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, provides up to \$25,000 for homeowners. Gov. Andrew Cuomo is pitching the program as a hallmark of his broader effort to address energy costs and air pollution while spurring growth of the retrofitting industry. "It's definitely created a buzz," says Herbert Dwyer, president and CEO of ASI Energy, a firm that audits and upgrades buildings for energy efficiency. Though it is difficult to assess New York's program in its early stages, officials in other states are watching what happens as they look for ways to spur investment in an industry that could, according to a study released by Deutsche Bank Climate Change Advisors and the Rockefeller Foundation, eliminate \$1 trillion in energy costs nationwide. "It's one of the hot areas that a number of states are looking at," says Steve Nadel, executive director of the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. New York's program has attracted 376 applicants — an encouraging sign, says Dayle Zatlin, a spokesperson for the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, which oversees the program. Participation in these early stages has been capped at half a percent of ratepayers in the service areas of seven participating utilities, but state officials say they expect thousands to sign up in the coming years.

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Apple Plans Nation's Biggest Fuel Cell Energy Project at North Carolina Data Center

Raleigh News & Observer (NC) (04/02/12) Murawski, John

Apple Inc. filed plans with the N.C. Utilities Commission on March 29 to build the

Joe Marcotte, Fluid Market Strategies
Joe Polaski, Apogee Interactive
Joel Riciputi, Nexant
John Hasson, Toshiba
John Lux, Agentis
John Sherin, Powerstream
Karine Shamlan, Clean Markets
Katie Talich, Fluid Market Strategies
Kelsey Cummings, SmartWatt Energy
Kevin Stralo, AM Conservation
Kerry Wallace, ARCA
Kimberly Huffman, DTE Energy
Kristina Gregory, Constellation Energy
Kumudini Ambatipudi, So Cal Gas
Lauren Partridge, LIPA
Linda Schwantner, LIPA
LK Browning, TVA
Mac Scott, National Energy Foundation
Mary Nokes, Shaw Environmental
Michael Knuckey, ICF International
Michael Steifman, Utilisave
Mike Hyland, APPA
Nick Pulley, JACO Environmental
Nikki DellaPenta, Toshiba
Paul Schwarz, Research into Action
Peter Love, Energy Services Assoc of Canada
Peter Noland, RHA
Ralph Perhac, TVA
Rich Marshall, JACO Environmental
Richard Faesy, Energy Futures Group, Inc.
Robin Reinarts, National Energy Foundation
Ronald Semp, RISE Engineering
Ryan Persaud, Powerstream
Sandra Eason-Perez, Orange & Rockland
Selcrest Husbands, PowerGen
Selena Heise, Fluid Market Strategies
Steve DeBlasi, Toshiba
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Tamsen Meierdierck, CLEAResult
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Todd Recknagel, AM Conservation
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nation's largest private fuel cell energy project, a nonpolluting, silent power plant that will generate electricity from hydrogen. The 4.8-megawatt project would be located in Maiden, N.C., about 40 miles northwest of Charlotte, where Apple has built a data center to support the company's iCloud online data storage system and its SIRI voice-recognition software. "That's a huge vote of confidence in fuel cells," says James Warner, policy director of the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Energy Association in Washington. Fuel cells generate electricity through an electro-chemical process and are compared to batteries that give out power as long as they have a source of hydrogen. However, they are expensive and in the past have been used only in experimental realms, such as NASA moon launches. But in the past decade, the price has been coming down, and commercial projects have been proliferating in California, a state that offers an incentive program to cover roughly half the cost of the cells, notes Shane Stephens, manager of research development at the National Fuel Cell Research Center at the University of California in Irvine. The federal government offers a 30 percent tax credit, but no incentive is available for fuel cells in North Carolina. The facility will consist of 24 fuel cell modules. It will extract hydrogen from natural gas supplied by Piedmont Natural Gas, though it is not clear how much gas will be required. Apple currently has a 500,000-square-foot data center on the 11.5-acre site, and construction recently began on a second building on the campus. Apple is also developing miniature fuel cells to power laptop computers. Apple does stand to receive bonus payments from Duke Energy if it puts clean energy on Duke's grid, offsetting electricity from conventional power plants. The amount Apple would receive for selling renewable energy certificates to Duke would be privately negotiated.

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The Cost of Green Buildings

Buildings (04/12) Vol. 106, No. 4, P. 32 Penny, Janelle

According to the General Services Administration (GSA), it costs less to build and maintain a green building than it does a conventional edifice, as indicated by a study of 22 green federal buildings in the United States. The study compares each building's energy use intensity, energy cost, carbon dioxide emissions, maintenance costs, water use, and occupant satisfaction against widely accepted industry and GSA baselines. Sixteen of the buildings were LEED-NC certified or registered, with the remaining six complying with the requirements of other sustainable building programs, including ENERGY STAR and the California Title 24 Energy Standard. "In general, buildings incorporating sustainable design practices perform better than industry average buildings," notes Eleni Reed with GSA's Public Buildings Service. "Upfront investment in sustainability measures needs to be matched by sustainable operations and maintenance practices. Building owners need to compare the performance of their buildings to internally established baselines." The cost of retrofitting some green upgrades into existing buildings can sometimes appear excessive because the new, more sustainable materials or equipment were not part of the building's original design. This can have an impact on product choice and the scope of work. However, smaller, less intrusive revisions are easier to deploy and the green materials involved may come with little to no premium. One should study how building systems impact each other to determine the best technology area to invest in. Architect Todd Jersey recommends finding choices that pay off in the long term whenever possible, rather than only considering first cost. It is clearly indicated by a review of green material costs over the last several years that prices are likely to continue to decline, especially for maturing technologies such as photovoltaics, because products that have already demonstrated their potential in many buildings ease consumers' minds and allow demand to grow.

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Neighbors Band Together for Home Efficiency

Philadelphia Inquirer (03/20/12) Bauers, Sandy

JACO

LIPA

NEEP

PowerDirect Marketing

Schneider Electric

SmartWatt Energy

Have a Question...Ask AESP!

Do you need advice from your peers on your latest project or program? If so, submit your questions to AESP's LinkedIn group. Or, do you have something to add to this recent discussion?

Can 1 x 32W T8 lamp replace 2 x 40W T12? Can that retrofit maintain same brightness (not lumen or lux) needed for the people who work under the light(s)? — Hiroshi Tanimoto

Mark Stetz: *Can you make a few test installations? I've seen retrofits where 2 T8s replaced 2 T12s and you needed sunglasses afterwards. The key is to use a ballast with a high ballast factor (> 1.0) to overdrive a single T8 lamp. Reflectors help too.*

Hiroshi Tanimoto: *Is the lamp life same with (> 1.0) factor ballast? Or, it may shorten the lamp life? More members of other groups said it can be done. However, it seems for the cases that T12 has lost quite a bit of initial lumen. Of course, practically it would be the case.*

Mark Stetz: *Not certain about lamp life. Overdriving may shorten it a bit, but T-8s tend to have longer life than T-12s. Would have to research the lifetime question. Invest in an inexpensive footcandle /lux meter and measure the before & after illuminance to verify. Even if the lumens are a little less, the better CRI may provide comparable illumination.*

Mike Carter: *A standard F40T12 lamp will output around 2,850 lumens (5,700 lumens for two lamps). A high performance F32T8 lamp will output 3100 lumens with a 0.78 ballast factor. One F32T8 lamps with a 1.20 ballast factor will output around 3,720 lumens. So, 30% more lumens, but not twice as much. You possibly could eliminate one in three 2-lamp T12 fixtures with 2-lamp*

Philadelphia residents are lining up for EnergyWorks, an energy efficiency program that provides subsidized home-energy audits — as little as \$150 for one that would normally cost \$400 — and loans starting at 0.99 percent interest for the insulation, air-sealing, and other work to bring down the energy bills. Generally, most homeowners can expect a 20 percent to 30 percent savings in energy costs if they have an audit and do the recommended work, says Jay Murdoch, executive director of Efficiency First, a national nonprofit trade association of "home performance" workers. The EnergyWorks program originated with the Metropolitan Caucus, whose members are Mayor Nutter and commissioners from the four surrounding Pennsylvania counties. Among shared issues, energy efficiency quickly rose toward the top, says Andrew Rachlin, who until recently was the city's deputy chief of staff for economic development. He oversaw the grant, which is from the federal Department of Energy and also has a component for commercial buildings. The goal of EnergyWorks was what Rachlin calls "a catalytic intervention" — educate consumers, give them confidence to go ahead, get more jobs for auditors and contractors, and watch the energy footprint of the region shrink. The Energy Coordinating Agency, a local nonprofit known for weatherizing low-income homes, began soliciting companies with the required certifications and now has more than 20 auditors and 100 contractors. The program began in November 2010, and so far more than 900 homeowners in the region have gone through one of its audits. Of those, 641 homeowners used the financing program and collectively borrowed \$5.3 million to do subsequent upgrades. Homeowners who implemented "whole house" retrofits — as opposed to doing just part of the recommended work — should see energy reductions of 16 percent to 20 percent, according to EnergyWorks, with annual cost savings estimated to be \$267 to \$335 per house. For every tax dollar spent on the program, homeowners have spent two, Rachlin notes.

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Behind the Meter

EnergyBiz (03/01/12) Vol. 9, No. 2, P. 38 Opalka, William

Demand response has been crucial to avoiding potentially disastrous events throughout 2011 in instances when power demand has come dangerously close to overwhelming the grid across the nation. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has reported that nationally, the resources available to provide generation for demand response exceed seven percent, but some are wondering if the system is not coming close to the limit of its effectiveness. The number of events that threaten to exceed available supply is going up, and the financial incentives that utilities offer customers to reduce their loads when demand spikes may no longer be enough for many. There are those that believe a variation of demand response that offers a different option might be needed. They suggest a new model where a large commercial or industrial user uses on-site generation at times of spiking demand, rather than curtailing use. This model is already being used by Tangent Energy Solutions, which has taken on all risk involved by building, owning, and operating the power plant, or possibly a solar array or small gas-fired turbine. The new model would place renewable generation on the customer's side of the meter, though risk does exist for the model, as problems with shale gas could drive up prices, and states could be pressured into relaxing energy mandates which would hurt solar markets. However, FERC Order 745 makes megawatts equal to megawatts, which has helped this customer-side model, as did the Pennsylvania General Assembly's 2008 act that mandated reduced energy demand, but did not spell out implementation or anything related to demand response. The customer-side, behind-the-meter energy generation for demand response could be a creative solution to reduce consumption.

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The Trouble With Freeriders

Public Utilities Fortnightly (03/12) Vol. 150, No. 3, P. 34 Haeri, Hossein; Khawaja, M. Sami

T8 fixtures, but that is the best you could do (3 x 5700 lumen T12 roughly equivalent to 2 x 7440 lumen T8).

Join AESP's [LinkedIn discussion group today!](#)

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AESP is a member-based association dedicated to improving the delivery and implementation of energy efficiency, energy management and distributed renewable resources. AESP provides professional development programs, a network of energy practitioners, and promotes the transfer of knowledge and experience.

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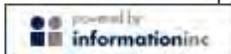
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The concept of freeridership continues to be a subject of debate among energy efficiency policy makers, program administrators, and evaluation experts, as years of research has not led to a firm definition of net-to-gross (NTG) ratio, what it includes, how to best measure it, and what to do with the results once the measurement is done. Freeridership refers to participants who practice efficiency whether or not incentives are available, and they factor into the calculation of a program's impacts as the ratio of net savings to gross savings. The issue of freeridership and the broader question of attribution are legitimate concerns because ratepayer funds are used for what is considered to be a socially optimal outcome. The lack of progress has inhibited creativity and innovation in program design and delivery, and could dissipate political support for energy efficiency if policy makers and the public view NTG and its measurement as dubious and problematic. To determine whether a program is likely to attract freeriders, regulators could establish a series of tests that a program has to pass to avoid high freeridership. Program administrators should monitor product markets closely to see if a transformation has occurred and exit the market when it has. Regulators would have to recognize the obvious but hard to quantify benefits, and be willing to credit program administrators by lowering savings targets or rewarding them. A well-conceived program will likely generate enough spillover to offset freeridership.

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Featured Articles

Electric Vehicles are Driving Change in the Energy Industry

By Karen Morris



Karen Morris

Utilities across the nation are bracing for the impact electric vehicles will bring to peak load demand in their service territories. The first mass produced plug-in cars in the U.S. are just beginning to reach the market. Since 2009, funding from the federal government has given manufacturers a jump-start with billions of dollars of stimulus money and tax credits for R&D. Researchers predict PEVs (plug-in electric vehicles) and PHEVs (plug-in hybrid electric vehicles) will total 3.9 percent of the auto market by 2020 and almost 18 percent by 2030. That amounts to 15 million cars over the course of 19 years.

A recent study published by EPRI suggests electric utilities can play an active role in the adoption of electric transportation by addressing the topic in customer outreach programs. The study lists the utility website as its first communication channel followed by the more traditional media outlets.

Many customers are unaware of the cost of ownership of an electric vehicle and the impact on their utility bills. An initial investment of a typical charging unit for the home runs about \$2,000. The home charger is ideal as it can replenish a charge quickly and

potentially allows the customer to take advantage of off-peak charging and special rates. On the other hand, if everyone starts charging in the evening, there is a potential for spikes in usage. Imagine this, commuters coming home during a peak season, plugging-in the EV, turning on the AC and the big screen TV. This scenario will create a challenge for utilities.

What should utilities be considering?

With the dawning of this new era in transportation, energy companies have a unique opportunity to educate and influence consumers' behavior in regards to energy use.

Forward thinking utilities like ConEd, Georgia Power, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, and Southern California Edison are all investing heavily in marketing strategies around the topic of electric vehicles.



Do your research

Clusters of EV use will likely appear in urban areas where range is not a concern. Consider government subsidies offered in your service territory, as well as how green your region is. Higher income drivers will also be early adopters of the technology. Edison Electric Institute predicts large urban areas in California, Texas and Florida are likely hot spots. Trends in the adoption of hybrid vehicles can also give insight to areas of EV impact.

Flexible rate plans

To encourage early adopters to charge vehicles during off-peak hours, utilities will begin to offer time-of-use rates, a flat fee for charging at night, or a fixed rate for charging anytime. Rate plans can be difficult for the average consumer to understand and one plan may not be right for all.

Are you playing it safe?

Safety is another concern around EVs; customers will be exposed to more voltage than ever before. Most utilities are considered a reliable resource for safety information regarding electricity.

Reduce carbon impact... really?

While approximately 90 percent of today's electricity is still coal generated, compared to gas, there is still a small savings in CO2 emissions. The immediate impact of carbon reduction will be seen locally in air quality because EVs do not release pollutants in their exhaust. From a global perspective, as more electricity is generated from renewables, emissions will be reduced. So the long term investment in the environment and building an infrastructure to support positive steps forward, will benefit us all.

What is your communication strategy?

Many utilities are developing programs and communication strategies that include electric vehicle awareness programs. At Apogee Interactive, we are seeing large amounts of online real estate devoted to the topic of Electric Vehicles.

Karen Morris is the Marketing Manager for Apogee Interactive, Inc.

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Social Media Marketing for Energy Efficiency Part 1: Facebook & Twitter

by Danielle Marquis



Danielle Marquis

You have more than 40,000 utility customers and a marketing budget of less than \$90,000. Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to let all of these customers know about your energy efficiency program in order to have any hope of achieving the ambitious savings goals established by the state public service commission. You're excited! You can do this! \$90,000 is a lot of money! Then you do some math...and realize you have about \$2.25 to spend on marketing to each customer. Sound familiar?

With budgets tightening at utilities nationwide, there is less money available for marketing than ever, while energy savings goals are continuously increasing. Enter social media, everyone's darling because, well, it's free. Never mind that most marketing professionals don't fully understand how it works or how to maximize it, it's free! And people love it! And it's hip and cool. And if Ashton Kutcher can get 9,926,446 followers hanging on his every tweet, so can your utility, darn it.

In this first part of a two-part series, we'll explore Twitter and Facebook, the more "traditional" social media platforms currently in use by most utilities.



Twitter

Twitter might be the fastest-growing social networking site—according to Media Bistro they're on track to have 250 million active users by the end of 2012—but that doesn't mean it's a magic bullet to market your utility. Twitter shines because it allows utilities to connect in real-time with angry or concerned customers—think outages, service issues and the like. It is damage control and image maintenance, wrapped up in 140 characters.

After reviewing utility activity on Twitter in late March 2012, it became clear that the most effective current use by utilities is to communicate directly with their customers. PPL Electric in Pennsylvania was seen responding to customer questions about comparing PPL rates to those of other suppliers and giving instructions to followers about how to reach their staff during evening hours and weekends when the social media team is offline. Similarly, Com Ed was seen responding to customers having issues downloading documents from the Com Ed website and replying to customers asking questions about outages. PG&E was responding to customer questions about outages as well, in addition to replying directly to a customer with concerns about a repair issue.

The common thread was customer service and upon review of the customer's original tweets, the utility's response and the customer's reaction it is clear this method works. The utility was able to defray any issues immediately, while providing a very public resolution and "friendly face" to their other followers. Twitter can be used for other things as well—following conversations around certain topics or events (designated by hashtags, i.e., #SmartGrid), attracting people to the utility's website, sharing mini case studies, gaining wider coverage of press releases, etc., but it seems to be at its best when the core use is to reach out directly to customers, with a special emphasis on residential customers.

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

Facebook

Most people have a love/hate relationship with Facebook. On the one hand, it wastes a lot of people's valuable time, on the other hand, it's a nice, free (!) way to connect with people on a regular basis in our busy lives. Facebook currently has around one billion (yes, billion with a "b") active users who spend more time on Facebook than any other U.S. website, according to Media Bistro, and it's growing every day.

Most of those people log on at least once per day, more than half are out of college and the fastest growing demographic is those 25 years and older, according to The Zen of Social Media Marketing. Many small businesses use Facebook as their website, making it an effective way to reach those customers, provided they are successful in getting them to "Like" their page. Small towns, especially in remote areas, have also latched onto the power of Facebook to rally their communities around various initiatives and events.

A review of Facebook activity by utilities in late March 2012 revealed an innovative idea by National Grid to set up regional Facebook pages for their Upstate New York, New York City, Massachusetts and Rhode Island service territories. Their social media team is posting info and updates specific to the communities they serve in these areas, including: programs and initiatives, tips to save energy at home or work, and outage and restoration updates. The pages are fairly new, but already include photos of local school children showing off energy efficiency projects and the like.

This approach will likely be more successful than the traditional approach of posting news and links on one main page, as customers will feel more connected to these regional pages. It'll be interesting to see how effective this approach is for National Grid in the coming months.

Along those same lines, SMUD in California is doing an excellent job of connecting local events they've sponsored with their Facebook posts. Several of the organizations they've sponsored were shown in their news feed publicly thanking the utility for their support and linking to more information about the local organizations SMUD was supporting. This is great public relations content and since it's coming from the organizations instead of the utility, it feels more genuine. Following up on this local focus, SMUD also posts links to local hikes in the area, a tactic which resulted in more shares by other than any other post reviewed. Oncor in Texas has a similar tactic in that they routinely post weather forecast updates with links to programs that might help, for example, reduce cooling costs on a hot day. When Facebook content is useful to others, followers are more likely to share it with their friends, thus creating a network effect for the utility's brand, messaging and programs.

The lesson here is that providing useful, timely information that is applicable to residential and commercial followers is a great use of Facebook. Working to tailor content to a very specific market segment is a smart idea, as those who've "liked" your page will often tire quickly of a series of posts that have no relevance to that individual or organization. A good way to get more interaction on your utility's Facebook page is to include photos, especially of local people participating in events sponsored or hosted by the utility. These types of images and posts are a great thing to encourage "sharing" of posts among your fans.

In the next installment of this series we'll explore YouTube, which is beginning to gain more acceptance by utilities, and Honest Buildings, a new social media platform designed specifically for buildings.

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AESP News

We'll see you in Baltimore or Toronto...or both!

There is still time to register for AESP's Spring Conference on Marketing and Implementation, taking place in Baltimore in two weeks. After this, AESP's next event will be the Summer Conference in Toronto, "Exploring the Next Generation of EE programs — A North American Perspective," to be held July 30-31. Note that U.S. citizens will need a passport to enter Canada, so start making plans now.

But wait! There's more...

Besides the two training courses offered in Baltimore this May, AESP will soon be unveiling more than ten NEW COURSES! New subjects will include a complete demand response curriculum, Energy Risk Management, Natural Gas Markets, Renewable Markets, and Leadership for Exceptional Team Performance. One of the new subjects could be just the training that your department needs. Stay tuned for more information next month.

"Switch" was On!

On March 6, nearly 250 energy professionals met at the Absinthe House in Boulder for the AESP Rocky Mountain Chapter's inaugural "Switch" event. This sold-out event featured 12 thought leaders who delivered high-impact presentations on the future of energy and sustainability. Each presenter had only five minutes and 20 slides to inspire and inform the audience.

Small Businesses subject of SEARCH

For its second annual event, the AESP Southeast Chapter (SEARCH) held a mini-workshop on "Targeting Small Business for Energy Efficiency" hosted by Advanced Energy at their office in Raleigh, NC, on April 25. The event was attended by over 60 individuals. Speaker presentations were followed by a tour of the Duke Energy Envision Center, which demonstrates Smart Grid technology.

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News Releases and Announcements

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[New Energy MBA Programs Offered Through UW College of Business](#)

[RAND study: "Energy Services Analysis" — An Alternative Approach for Identifying Opportunities to Reduce Emissions of Greenhouse Gases"](#)

[SportsArt Fitness introduces ECOFIT Networking System for electricity-producing Green System](#)

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