

Black Hills Power, Inc. d/b/a Black Hills Energy

Customer Outreach

Narrative of Outreach and Community Events
Conducted during Plan Year 2017



Black Hills Power, Inc. d/b/a Black Hills Energy (“BHP” or the “Company”) has been implementing an outreach strategy that was developed for a three year program period. The first program year was from September 1, 2017 and concluded August 31, 2018 (PY2017). The Energy Efficiency Solutions (EES) plan includes methods that are easy to implement to improve energy efficiency in the businesses or homes of BHP commercial and residential customers.

Marketing & Advertising

Marketing and advertising are an integral way in which BHP relays the EES program information that is available for both residential and commercial customers. Through BHP’s website, bill inserts, billboards, community sponsorships and program handouts customers are able to learn more about the prescriptive commercial and residential program as well as the custom commercial program.

The BHP website was updated in PY2017 to make it easier for the customer to navigate to the specific program information they were looking for. The program applications were also updated to provide clear and concise details about the supporting documentation that is required with the submission of the application. Based on feedback from electricians and contractors in the Black Hills area, the program applications and the Energy Savings excel sheet will be combined and simplified in order for the customer, dealer and contractor to be able to easier fill out and submit their respective required data for the project that is being submitted for rebate review. By simplifying this paperwork, all parties involved will be better able to submit, review and process the project applications.

Bill inserts are an effective way to promote one element of the EES program. Two bill inserts were included in customer bills for the PY2017. One of the bill inserts was a flyer promoting the appliance recycling program and the other one was included with the *Energy Connections* newsletter promoting the LED light bulb rebates.

Two retractable banners were designed to be used with the BHP booth for home shows and other events to promote residential and commercial energy efficiency rebates. Figure 1. Shows a large flex wrap billboard that was installed on Deadwood Avenue, which is a main street in Rapid City. With this street being very high traffic, this billboard has been a beneficial advertising tool for the residential EES program.



Figure 1. Residential EES Billboard

New marketing materials were developed with the Creative Services department at BHP for PY2017. Energy Efficiency themed folders and magnets were designed as well as 8 ½” x 11” (standard size) doubled sided color flyers providing a summary of the EES programs. One side summarized the residential programs and the other side summarized the commercial programs. A half-standard size colored sheet was also developed that detailed the monetary compensation that was available for the different EES programs; one side for residential and the other for commercial customers. In addition, a 3”x5” magnet was developed for customers as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Residential EES Magnet

SAVE YOUR ENERGY for a night on the town

If you're a Black Hill Energy customer, you can earn a **rebate on Energy Star LED bulbs** and put a little extra cash back in your pocket.

We'll give you a **50 percent rebate up to \$5 per bulb** – with a minimum rebate payment of \$10.

After you buy your LEDs, save your receipt, fill out one of the nearby forms and follow the instructions to submit it.

Have questions? Call Amy at 605-399-5082.



Figure 3. LED Light Bulb Rebate Sign

Lastly, residential LED light bulb rebate rip-away forms were placed in retail locations around the Black Hills area in SD. These rebate forms were in retail locations that sold LED light bulbs and included, Menards, Lowes, locally owned hardware stores and other retail stores where LED light bulbs were sold. When the rebate forms and sign (Figure 3) were placed in each store, the manager was provided training about the rebate programs as well as how the rebate forms need to be filled out and submitted.

The customer response to the marketing and advertising completed during PY2017 was very positive. Customer calls inquiring about the information in their bill inserts for appliance recycling and LED light bulb was extremely successful. Overall, customers have been educated about the rebates that are available due to the BHP EES website information being updated and providing program specific flyers as handouts to commercial and residential customer.

Community Outreach

HOME SHOWS AND COMMUNITY EVENT BOOTHS

Home shows in the Black Hills area was a great way to remain visible as a utility at events that can draw thousands of people. The main promotions presented at the home shows were residential and commercial energy efficiency programs. In addition, a lighting display comparing different light bulbs to LED bulbs has always been a great

attraction to the booth. Two retractable banners were designed which was an additional way attention was drawn to the booth as shown in Figure 4. and 5.



Figure 4. Residential Banner



Figure 5. Commercial Banner

Besides the EES programs being featured at these shows, the ASAP program, Demand Meters and Generlink, which is a portable generator hookup and safety switch, were also promoted at the Home Shows.

The Black Hills area Home Show booths were staffed by Energy Efficiency, Construction Services and Customer Service personnel. BHP participated in four home shows in South Dakota and are listed below:

1. Black Hills Home Builders Association Spring City Home Show – March 2018 in Rapid City
2. Custer Spring Home & Garden Show – March 2018 in Custer
3. Optimist Home Show – March 2018 in Spearfish
4. Spring Fling Home & Garden Show – April 2018 in Hot Springs

In addition to home shows, area community events have been a great way to promote Energy Efficiency programs with a booth. EES program folders were handed out to customers and BHP personnel were able to discuss with the customers the rebates available, the application process, and any additional information the customers inquired about. Below are listed the four community events where the BHP Energy Efficiency department had a booth:

1. Ellsworth Air Force Base Picnic
2. Ellsworth Air Force Base Discover the Black Hills
3. SD Center for Enterprise Opportunity - Celebrating Women in Business Luncheon

4. Hot Springs Restoration Summit

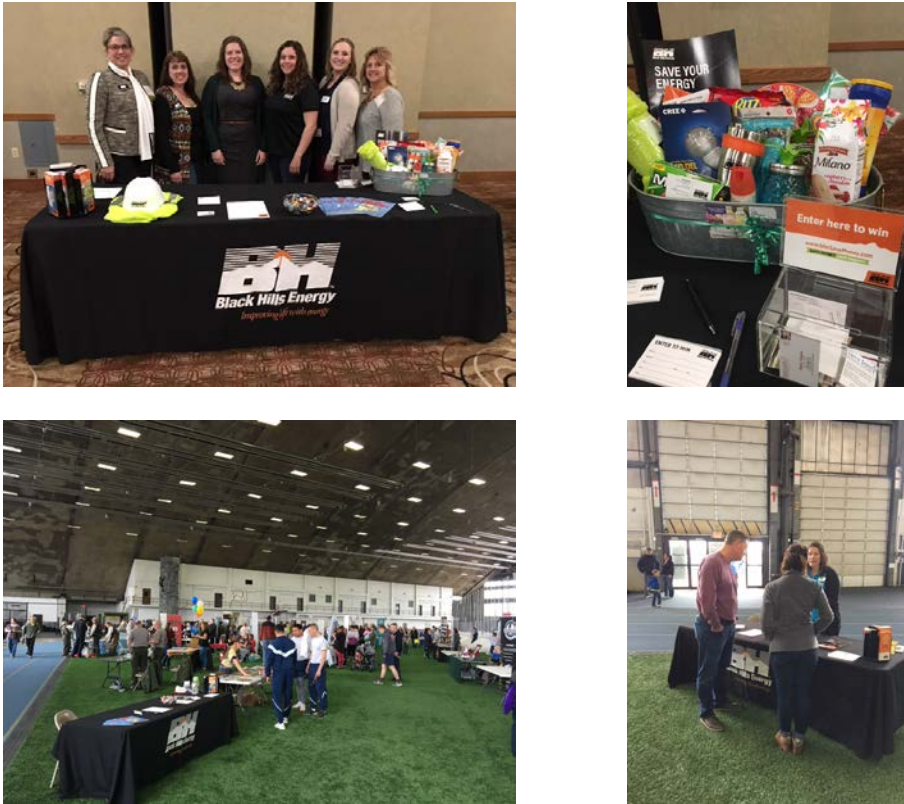


Figure 6. Black Hills Energy Community Booths

COMMUNITY NETWORKING EVENTS

One of the best ways to reach BHP customers on a more personal level has been to attend networking events through area Chamber of Commerce mixers and other community networking groups. These regular events allowed the Energy Efficiency Program Coordinator to build relationships within the community, present the EES programs to the group, and discuss potential rebate opportunities for commercial and residential projects. A list of community networking groups within the Black Hills area where the EE program coordinator regularly attended are listed below:

1. Belle Fourche Chamber of Commerce
2. Black Hills Home Builders Association
3. Black Hills REALTORS
4. Custer Chamber of Commerce
5. Deadwood Chamber of Commerce
6. Hill City Chamber of Commerce
7. Rapid City Chamber of Commerce
8. Spearfish Chamber of Commerce
9. Sturgis Chamber of Commerce
10. Toastmasters
11. Young Professional's Group
12. Zonta International

Presenting the EES programs at a handful of these events has been a very effective way to share the commercial and residential EES program information to a variety of people while at one location. After each presentation there has been an influx of new applications.

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

Black Hills Energy is invested in and actively engaged within the communities we serve, live and work. BHP believes that a comprehensive outreach strategy is important in order to meet the overall needs of the community. BHP has continued to be involved in community relations activities, donations and institutional advertising in the Black Hills Power service territory.

There has been numerous opportunities to provide community sponsorship, financial support, and advertising and marketing during the program year. In South Dakota, BHP spent \$229,667 towards community sponsorship. Each sponsorship provided BHP with the opportunity to show their commitment to contributing to the communities in which we serve. In addition, BHP also provided financial support through community outreach in the amount of \$505,295. A total of \$110,347 was spent towards advertising and marketing.

Education Outreach

SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATION

The Living Wise school-based energy efficiency program was presented to fifth-grade students at area elementary schools. Teachers were provided a curriculum kit to guide the program. Each student was given a kit, as shown in Figure 7, to take home that contained easy-to-use energy efficient supplies which could be installed in their home, with permission and assistance from their parents or guardian. Each kit contained a nine (9) watt LED bulb, high efficiency showerhead, kitchen faucet aerator, LED night light, filtertone alarm, digital thermometer, 5 second flow-test bag, and a toilet leak tab. Also included in the kit was an interactive card detailing water and natural resource facts.



Figure 7. Energy Efficiency Kit

The program's goal were to offer energy efficiency education to fifth-grade students in the school district within Black Hills Power's service territory. 74% of program participants responded that they did work with their family on this program. One teacher from Vandenberg Elementary School stated, "As a teacher, what I liked about the program was that it got the students excited about energy and conservation." The overall participation for the Living Wise program was 46 teachers in SD with 1,166 students. The total participation per city is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Total Number of Participants for the Living Wise Program

City	Teachers	Students
Box Elder	11	269
Hill City	2	35
Hot Springs	3	54
Lead-Deadwood	1	67
Piedmont	4	105
Rapid City	24	622
Spearfish	1	14

ELECTRO-TECHNOLOGY EXPO

Black Hills Energy has organized and sponsored the Electro-Technology Expo since 2000. The expo was held January 18, 2018 in Rapid City, SD. The Expo is designed to bring together energy experts to share their electronic technologies, applications, products and services. This event draws professionals from the building industry, commercial, industrial and trade allies.

Twenty-four class sessions were held during the 2018 expo and offered code and non-code hours for electricians through the state electrical commissions in South. There were also Continuing Education Credits for attendees through the City of Rapid City Mechanical Board. There was a class session offered discussing the EES programs available through Black Hills Energy. In addition, there was a presenter with a demonstration about energy efficiency measures.

A total of 349 attendees participated in the Electro-Technology Expo and twenty-two vendor booths. The key-note speaker was Don Martinez and he presented about the Energy Efficiency rebate programs available through Black Hills Energy in the South Dakota areas.

Historically the Expo has drawn mostly electricians but the planning committee for the 2019 Expo is gearing the event to draw in mechanical engineers and architects as well. This will be accomplished by offering a greater variety of class sessions that will appeal to a broader audience relating to these industries.

C&I ENERGY EFFICIENCY WORKSHOP

Energy Services organized an Energy Efficiency workshop, which was at the Black Hills Energy corporate office on May 24, 2018, and was geared to provide training to BHP key customers and trade allies who would like to stay up to date on new technologies available in the electronic industry. The speaker was Howard Wolfman, PE, and he discussed topics such as LED uniformity, foot candle requirements for retail, industrial, and roadway applications, as well as potential new technology that may be seen in the future.

BHP also presented at the beginning of the day to provide an overview of the Energy Efficiency rebate programs and how to submit the applications. There was a question and answer session to receive feedback from industry professionals on what sort of EES programs they would see as useful in the future. This was a full day event and had thirty participants.

COMMERCIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATE PROGRAM TRAINING

Educating electricians, contractors, builders, and dealers on how to submit the EES program applications has been a main focus for PY2017. By developing comprehensive EES program folders and providing clear information on the BHP website, industry professionals are able to submit more projects for potential commercial rebates.

The feedback on the handouts and training have been extremely positive. With improving the channels in which information is distributed, industry professionals are able to have a consistent and clear way to communicate about a project submission, status and any questions. By stream-lining the process, participants were more willing to submit rebates for their customers.

Conclusion

With a variety of communication hurdles to overcome during the PY2017 plan year, the Energy Efficiency Program Coordinator for the Black Hills area was able to overcome these hurdles by improving the means in which residential and commercial customers receive EES program information. Through website updates, handouts, trainings, and community events the EES program had a successful year.

With looking towards PY2018, the focus for this next year is providing training to builders, contractors and BHP lineman on the EES programs. By expanding the audience for the trainings to these groups it allows more streams of participation in the programs since more industry professionals will be discussing rebate options to their customers.