

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

Customer Outreach

Narrative of Outreach and Community Events
Conducted during Plan Year 2018



Black Hills Power, Inc. d/b/a Black Hills Energy (BHE) has been implementing an outreach strategy that was developed for a three year program period. The program year was from September 1, 2018 and concluded August 31, 2019 (PY2018). The Energy Efficiency Solutions (EES) plan includes methods that are easy to implement to improve energy efficiency in the businesses or homes of BHE commercial and residential customers.

Marketing & Advertising

Marketing and advertising are an integral way in which BHE relays the EES program information that is available for both residential and commercial customers. Through BHE'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 Black Hills website is more user friendly than in previous years because the customer can go directly to *bhesavemoney.com* to review rebate opportunities and energy efficiency strategies for their home. The program applications are on the website, which include clear and concise details about the supporting documentation that is required with the submission of their application.

Bill inserts are an effective way to promote the different rebate programs. Five bill inserts were included in customer bills for the program year 2018, which was from September 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019. Each month, the bill insert was a quarter page flyer (Figure 1.) promoting one of the rebate programs.

The large flex wrap billboard is 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.

The marketing materials that were developed during PY2017 by the Corporate Communications department at BHE have proven to be a very successful method of sharing both residential and commercial rebate program details.

GET A FEW EXTRA BUCKS WITH AN LED BULB REBATE

If you're one of our residential customers, we're now offering you a rebate on Energy Star LED bulbs until Aug. 31, 2019.

We'll give you a 50 percent rebate up to \$5 per bulb – with a minimum rebate payment of \$10 – limited to 40 bulbs per customer.

After you purchase LEDs at any retail location or online, save your receipt. Fill out the rebate form at www.blackhillsenergy.com/bright and mail in your information and the receipt.

For full details as well as other rebates that are available, visit bheSaveMoney.com.



Figure 1. Sample of Bill Insert

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 2. LED Light Bulb Rebate Sign

The residential LED light bulb rebate rip-away forms are an extremely beneficial way to promote the residential Energy Star LED program. These rebate forms are in retail locations that sold LED light bulbs and included, Menards, Lowes, locally owned hardware stores and retail stores where LED light bulbs were sold. When the rebate forms and sign (Figure 2) 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.

Customers were called to inquire on the marketing and advertising completed during PY2018. Based on the customers called the information in their bill inserts detailing the rebate programs was successful.

Community Outreach

HOME SHOWS AND COMMUNITY EVENT BOOTHS

Home shows in the Black Hills area are 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. Lighting displays comparing different light bulbs to LED bulbs has always been a great attraction to the booth. Another way to draw attention to the booth are two retractable banners that were designed as shown in Figure 3. & 4.



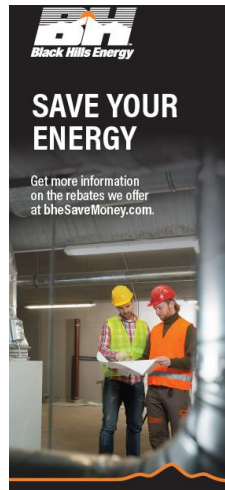


Figure 3. Residential Banners



Figure 4. Black Hills Energy Community Booth

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. BHE participated in three home shows and are listed below:

1. Black Hills Home Builders Association Spring City Home Show – March 2019 in Rapid City
2. Optimist Home Show – March 2019 in Spearfish
3. Spring Fling Home & Garden Show – April 2019 in Hot Springs

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

1. Sturgis Chamber of Commerce Mixer
2. Aging Gracefully Expo
3. 35th Annual Zonta Speak Out Event
4. SD CEO Women's Conference

COMMUNITY NETWORKING EVENTS

One of the best ways to reach BHE 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 allows 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 which the EE program coordinator regularly attends 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. Rapid City Chamber Ambassador Group
9. Spearfish Chamber of Commerce
10. Sturgis Chamber of Commerce
11. Rotary International
12. Zonta International
13. Toastmasters
14. Rapid City Chamber Young Professionals Group

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 in one location. After each presentation there has been an influx of new applications.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Black Hills Energy is invested in the communities we serve, live, and work. BHE believes that a comprehensive outreach strategy is important in order to meet the overall needs of the community. BHE has continued to be involved in community relations activities in the Black Hills Power service territory. In 2018, BHE invested over \$492,000 in the great work of dozens of worthy local organizations and nonprofits. Over 170 South Dakota employees shared their “energy” and volunteered to nearly 270 community organizations. This has resulted in a direct economic impact of \$139 million in South Dakota through franchise fees, contributions, compensation to 750 South Dakota employees, payments to suppliers and property, and sales and uses taxes.



Figure 5. Community Giving

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 6. 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 44 teachers in SD with 1,162 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
Belle Fourche, SD	4	100
Black Hawk, SD	1	60
Box Elder, SD	10	230
Hill City, SD	2	37
Hot Springs, SD	3	68
Rapid City, SD	18	548
Spearfish, SD	1	13
Summerset, SD	5	106
Total	45	1,162

ELECTRO-TECHNOLOGY EXPO

Black Hills Energy has organized and sponsored the Electro-Technology Expo since 2000. The expo was held January 17, 2019 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-six class sessions were held during the 2019 expo and offered code and non-code hours for electricians through the state electrical commissions in South Dakota and Wyoming. 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, the Energy Efficiency

Program Coordinator for BHP was on a panel discussing energy efficiency measures within the industry.

Over 350 participated in the Electro-Technology Expo and seventeen vendor booths. The key-note speaker was Dick Johnson, CEO/Manager, with West River Electric and Jim Dillon, Senior Manager of Energy Efficiency, with Black Hills Energy. The main content of the presentation discussed energy efficiency opportunities and providing ideas for how energy efficiency can help local businesses.

Historically the Expo has drawn mostly electricians but during the planning committee for the 2019 Expo their focus was to draw in mechanical engineers and architects as well. This was accomplished by offering a greater variety of class sessions that appealed to a broader audience related to these industries.

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 PY2018. By developing comprehensive EES program folders and providing clear information on the BHE website, industry professionals are able to submit more projects for potential commercial rebates.

The feedback on the handouts and training has been extremely positive. With the improved channels of information distribution, industry professionals were able to have a consistent and clear way to communicate about a project submission, status and questions. By stream-lining the process in PY2017, participants were more willing to submit rebates for their customers.

Conclusion

Communication continued to be a focus in PY2018. Looking towards PY2019, the focus for this next year is to continue providing training to builders, contractors and BHE 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.

Educational outreach to our residential customers on the savings potential through our programs will also be a focus going forward. Marketing efforts will continue to focus on reaching our residential customers. The increase in rural participation has been positive.



Feedback on savings from our programs has been very positive and we look forward to increasing those saving to our residential customers.

