

Seattle City Light

Comprehensive Municipal DSM

Seattle City Light, one of the nation's largest municipal utilities, reinforces the notion that utilities can effectively offer demand-side management (DSM) services in regions characterized by low power rates. Despite rates that rank among the lowest in the nation, Seattle City Light (SCL) exemplifies dedication to public power and has proven that commitment to social concerns and energy efficiency can result in exemplary levels of savings through widespread participation in all sectors of the City's economy. SCL's success can also be measured by its DSM expenditures as a percentage of gross revenues: In 1993 SCL budgeted a precedent-setting 9.1% of gross revenues for DSM!

Ironically, Seattle City Light was not the instigator of its early emphasis on energy efficiency. Instead, a lawsuit overturned the utility's planned investment in the Washington Public Power Supply System (a proposed series of nuclear plants) and effectively changed the utility's course, paving the way for what has become one of the nation's leading examples of energy efficiency. This success has been supported by the Bonneville Power Administration which over time has funded nearly one-quarter of SCL's DSM expenditures. More fundamentally, however, Seattle's energy efficiency success is a reflection of Seattle citizens' wishes to save on their electricity bills. SCL wants to increase comfort and well-being for all citizens, while fulfilling the utility's resource requirements through the most socially responsible and least cost means possible.

A key feature of Seattle's DSM efforts has been its dedicated staff, some of which have been involved in its energy conservation programs since they began in the late 1970s. Another feature has been the utility's willingness to hire its own critics, reaping talent from unlikely places, gaining strength from adversity, and fully exploiting the talents of a broad array of Seattle's population to engage one of the nation's premier efficiency programs.

Coupled with this staff orientation has been a rock-solid focus on evaluation. Since 1980 SCL has developed and benefitted from a highly capable DSM Evaluation Unit. This group provided a solid justification for early energy efficiency initiatives and is now responsible for carefully assessing the impacts of SCL's DSM programs.

Seattle City Light has clearly demonstrated the power of collaboration. To support energy efficiency for the City's low-income residents, the utility has worked closely with Seattle's Department of Housing and Human Services. With many other regional utilities it created the Lighting Design Lab, one of the nation's first and most successful energy centers. To address water shortages in the region, it collaborated with other City departments and utilities to implement the highly successful Home Water Savers program. These types of collaborations, coupled with its unique business culture and commitment to its customer/owners, yield a truly exemplary model of municipal utility DSM success well worthy of examination and replication.

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SEATTLE CITY LIGHT Comprehensive Municipal DSM

Sector: Residential, Commercial, Industrial

Measures: From weatherization, lighting, energy-efficient water heaters, and water efficiency measures to industrial and commercial efficiency improvements for motors and HVAC

Mechanism: Rebates, loans, and grants for energy-efficient measures; design assistance and energy audits for commercial and industrial sectors

History: Load management since the 1970s; developed first energy conservation program in 1978; formed evaluation unit and first IRP in 1980

1993 PROGRAM DATA

Energy savings:	52,629 MWh
Capacity savings:	5 aMW
Lifecycle energy savings:	885,294 MWh
Cost:	\$21,678,000

CUMULATIVE DATA

Energy savings:	2,454,256 MWh
Lifecycle energy savings:	7,380,743 MWh
Capacity savings:	41 aMW
Costs:	\$198,130,100

The Results Center produced 126 profiles of the most successful energy efficiency and renewable energy programs in the United States and around the world in the early and mid 1990s. With the support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ted Flanigan directed a research team at Colorado-based IRT Environment to produce and distribute these exceptional examples. Thanks to strong demand for solid case studies, The Results Center was supported by dozens of major utilities and energy associations worldwide. Today, The Results Center is managed again by Ted Flanigan, now at California-based EcoMotion Incorporated, a firm focused on strategic consulting, information dissemination, program design, outreach services, and aggressive implementation. To nominate highly successful programs, contact: The Results Center, c/o EcoMotion, 15375 Barranca Parkway, F-104, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 450-7155, or TFlanigan@EcoMotion.us