

Western Massachusetts Electric

Neighborhood Program

The Spectrum Neighborhood Program is a residential direct installation program that began in June of 1991 and provides free, cost-effective electricity conservation services to Northeast Utilities' Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECO) residential customers, with a special focus on low income customers. The program is currently offered in urban areas where, in a single visit, technicians install energy-efficient lighting, water heater tank wraps, pipe insulation, faucet aerators, and high-efficiency showerheads. In addition, refrigerator coils are cleaned, air conditioning filters are replaced, and hot water tank thermostat settings are lowered. Each customer is also provided with information on energy conservation.

The Neighborhood program is marketed aggressively to targeted neighborhoods. One to two days after a promotional mailer has arrived, program crews distribute brochures throughout the neighborhood describing the program, repeating the phone number that customers can use to sign up for the service, and informing customers of the time period that the program will be offered. One day after the brochures are distributed, a canvasser travels door-to-door, making appointments with those customers who have not responded by telephone. If possible, the canvasser will make the appointment for the same day. The program van is parked on the street receiving service and a sign is placed next to it informing passers-by of the program and soliciting walk-up appointments.

All crew members carry two-way radios and work within each neighborhood as a team. The radios facilitate communication among installers, and improve the overall efficiency of the installment process, allowing for rescheduling of appointments and requests for replacement supplies. The radios are also helpful in neighborhoods where safety concerns are an issue.

Northeast Utilities estimates that annual savings in 1991 were 564 kWh per participant. With over 4,500 participants, the program saved a total of 2,580 MWh in its first year of implementation. Lifecycle energy savings for the measures installed between the program start in mid-1991 and September, 1992 total approximately 30.7 GWh. To date installers have performed 45 retrofits per day, with each visit taking about 45 minutes. As of September, 1992, 9,144 installations have been completed in the WMECO service territory.

One of the biggest assets of the program is that it takes advantage of the educational opportunity presented to installers. Each time installers enter a home they raise awareness of the value of the energy efficiency measures to both the customer and the utility. In turn, the customers pass along their positive experiences and new-found knowledge to friends and acquaintances in their own and other communities, making the reach of the program extend beyond just the participant group.

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS ELECTRIC Neighborhood Program

Sector: Residential

Measures: Lighting, water heating, other home energy-efficiency improvements

Mechanism: Direct installation

History: Started in June, 1991.

1992 Program Data

Energy savings: 2.74 GWh

Lifecycle energy savings: 15.9 GWh

Cost: \$461,500

Cumulative Data (1991 - 1992)

Cumulative energy savings: 7.90 GWh

Lifecycle energy savings: 30.69 GWh

Cost: \$891,100

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

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