



# The Better Buildings Neighborhood View

July 2013

## In This Issue

[Introducing the Better Buildings Residential Network](#)

[Driving Demand](#)

[Building a Better Workforce](#)

[Innovation Nation](#)

[Stories From the Neighborhood](#)

[Tools to Build Better Buildings](#)

[Reports Reading List](#)

[Share the View](#)

## Introducing the Better Buildings Residential Network

The U.S. Energy Department announced the next phase of the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program at the [ACI National Home Performance Conference in April 2013](#) by launching the [Better Buildings Residential Network](#), which connects energy efficiency programs and partners together to share best practices and learn from one another to dramatically increase the number of energy-efficient American homes. [Residential Network members](#) provide the Department with an annual update of the residential energy efficiency upgrades they have completed, and share information about the benefits associated with completed upgrades. Membership benefits include access to peer exchange calls, tools, templates, resources, newsletters, and recognition opportunities.

In addition to learning more about the Network, ACI conference participants were able to test drive a beta version of the new online Better Buildings Residential Program Solution Center. This collection of resources and lessons learned from Better Buildings Neighborhood Program partners, Home Performance with ENERGY STAR sponsors, and others will help residential energy upgrade programs and partners plan, implement, manage, and evaluate their programs. For those who missed the demonstration, this [webinar presentation](#) offers a closer look at the tool's features.

Learn more about the [Better Buildings Residential Network](#). To join the Network, email [bbresidentialnetwork@ee.doe.gov](mailto:bbresidentialnetwork@ee.doe.gov) for a membership form.

"Our energy bills have plummeted, and we couldn't be happier with the aesthetic and fiscal results."

-Karen Stanley, a homeowner who received a home energy upgrade through the [Connecticut Neighbor to Neighbor Energy Challenge](#)

Read more of the [growing number of testimonials](#) from satisfied customers of Better Buildings Neighborhood Program partners.

## Driving Demand

### EnergyWorks Springs Into Action With Limited-Time Loan Payment Offer

[EnergyWorks](#) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, surpassed 1,500 completed residential upgrades in May. The recent milestone was boosted by a limited-time offer designed to drive homeowners' demand for energy upgrades by paying part of their financing. Between April 1 and June 30, 2013, EnergyWorks offered to pay the first six monthly payments on approved, low-cost loans for energy efficiency home improvements, making the loans more lucrative now than ever in the program's history.\* In the first two months, the offer generated more than 175 loan applications, with a total of 500 applications by the end of June. Nearly 200 of those customers have already completed upgrades.



The offer, made possible through EnergyWorks' financing partner Keystone

## Consumer Energy Tip

Just in time for summer, the Department and the Ad Council have launched new

public service advertisements about simple, practical actions that consumers can take to save money on their energy bills. For example, you can save as much as 10% a year on heating and cooling by simply turning your thermostat back 7 to 10 degrees from your normal temperature setting for eight hours a day. Read more in the [Department's blog post](#) to learn how small changes can add up to big results. The Department and the Ad Council have also created an online toolkit with outreach tools to help program administrators get their messages to the media.



## Related Events

[National Clean Energy Summit 6.0: Energizing Tomorrow](#)

August 13, 2013  
Las Vegas, NV

[2013 International Energy Program Evaluation Conference](#)

August 13–15, 2013  
Chicago, IL

[Consortium for Energy Efficiency \(CEE\) Industry Partners Meeting](#)

September 16–20, 2013  
Atlanta, GA

[ACEEE National Conference on Energy Efficiency as a Resource](#)

September 22–24, 2013  
Nashville, TN

[World Energy Engineering Congress](#)

September 25–27, 2013

Home Energy Loan Program (HELP), was promoted by contractors and through an extensive marketing campaign, including a press release, social media posts, radio spots, and digital advertisements on the Southeastern Pennsylvania regional rail. Since its inception in 2006, Keystone HELP has issued more than 11,000 loans totaling more than \$75 million.

In a recent effort to help public sector investors meet the demand for access to low-cost capital, the Pennsylvania Treasury sold nearly 5,000 Keystone loans to private lenders. According to the State Treasurer Rob McCord, the sale "reflects the soundness and high-performing nature of these loans" and offers a possible model for other private sector loan programs.

Read more about [EnergyWorks' financing offer](#) and the Better Buildings partner's [history with Keystone HELP](#).

*\*Limited to 10-year loan term for these qualifying EnergyWorks/Keystone HELP loans: Whole House, 0.99% Annual Percentage Rate (APR), Advanced Performance 4.99% APR, ENERGY STAR 5.99% APR. Subject to credit approval by AFC First Financial Corporation.*

## Charlottesville, Virginia, Makes the LEAP to 1,000 Upgrades

The [Local Energy Alliance Program](#) (LEAP) recently reached its [1,000th upgrade milestone](#) by helping Margie Garmey make her home more comfortable. Garmey is just one of many Charlottesville, Virginia, homeowners now enjoying lower energy bills thanks to a LEAP home energy upgrade.



Energy-efficient upgrades helped Margie Garmey save money while reducing her home's impact on the planet.

In the years following Garmey's move to her newly constructed two-story home in 1995, there were signs the house wasn't running as efficiently as it should. Although the home had central air conditioning, it was impossible to sufficiently cool the second floor.

"Like most homeowners who don't work on the house themselves, I couldn't figure out by staring at my house whether I needed to replace my windows or increase my insulation [to make the second floor more comfortable]," Garmey said.

Based on a LEAP home energy assessment and taking advantage of the program's financing incentives, Garmey had her whole house air sealed, the attic insulated, the water heater replaced, and a gas leak fixed. To address the excess heat on the second floor, Garmey also had energy-efficient improvements made to the HVAC system. She and her partner estimate that the upgrades have helped them save 22% on their energy bills.

The upgrades have also given Garmey the peace of mind that they are doing their part to protect the environment.

"The psychological comfort is big for us," Garmey said. "I think we did good things for both us personally and the environment in general by not wasting energy."

In total, LEAP's home energy upgrades have helped central Virginia homeowners save \$550,000 in cumulative energy costs since the program's inception in 2009. Learn more about LEAP's recent milestone on the [Department's blog](#), and read

Washington, DC

[Association of Energy Services Professionals \(AESP\) Fall Conference](#)

September 30–October 2, 2013

Seattle, WA

[Western Industrial Energy Efficiency and Combined Heat and Power Regional Dialogue Meeting](#)

October 29, 2013

Salt Lake City, UT

[Behavior, Energy, and Climate Change Conference](#)

November 18–20, 2013

Sacramento, CA

the [BetterBuildings Lowell Energy Upgrade](#) and [CPS Energy Savers](#) that were also recently featured.

## Building a Better Workforce

### EnergyWorks KC Training Programs Provide Job Opportunities for Local Workers

By the end of February 2013, [EnergyWorks KC](#) had trained 208 workers and placed 91 qualified workers in green jobs in Kansas City, Missouri, according to a [recent report](#) by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC). MARC supports six organizations in the Kansas City region that provide workforce development training programs in energy efficiency, water conservation, and deconstruction through the EnergyWorks KC program.



Professionals trained through the program work on EnergyWorks KC projects and for other "green" contracting companies. Trainings target related jobs, including deconstruction contractors, lead abatement workers, commercial energy assessment professionals, and weatherization installation contractors.

EnergyWorks KC's workforce development efforts are just one of many Better Buildings partner successes. To date, Better Buildings Neighborhood Program partners have collectively trained more than 4,300 workers. [Read more](#) about EnergyWorks KC's training programs and Better Buildings Neighborhood Program partners' [progress](#).

## Innovation Nation

### RePower Bainbridge's "Final Boarding Call" Event Sets Sail for Success

"All aboard" was [RePower Bainbridge's](#) figurative call to action in April 2013 for its ["Final Boarding Call" event](#). The free, one-day event featured trade allies, lenders, utilities, and community organizations in one location to help homeowners complete home energy upgrades. An \$800 special rebate offer was extended to those attendees who signed up to work with a RePower trade ally to complete two or more qualifying energy efficiency upgrade measures. Nearly 70% of the 400 attendees took RePower up on its offer.



Click the thumbnail to view the "Final Boarding Call" event results.

One attendee in particular found the event to

be worth the trip. She pre-qualified for RePower Bainbridge's Whole House Energy Upgrade package for each of her six rental properties; connected with trade allies to schedule work; and received loan information from Puget Sound Cooperative Credit Union. [Learn more](#) about RePower Bainbridge's event.

## Stories From the Neighborhood

### NOLA Wise Helps Louisiana Move Ahead With Statewide Energy Efficiency Program

Louisiana's statewide energy efficiency program is back on track, thanks in part to [NOLA Wise](#), a Better Buildings Neighborhood Program partner in New Orleans, Louisiana. In February 2013, the Louisiana Public Service Commission halted its energy efficiency program, just two months after it was adopted. But on June 26, 2013, the commission voted to restore the program.



"A major source of the commission's change of heart was data we provided about energy savings achieved by NOLA Wise clients and testimony from ratepayers outside of New Orleans about how they would like access to programs like NOLA Wise," said Jackie Dadakis, a NOLA Wise partner. "Without having NOLA Wise as a demonstration over the last few years, we would never have this momentum statewide."

Louisiana's statewide energy efficiency program is set to resume in late July, following an additional public comment period. As part of the program, utilities will have one year to develop programs that offer financial incentives for energy upgrades to home and business owners. New Orleans residents have already benefitted from energy efficiency programs NOLA Wise and [Energy Smart](#), run by the utility Entergy New Orleans, Inc. Now Louisiana residents outside the New Orleans area will have access to programs to help them lower their energy usage and associated costs. [Read more](#) about this decision and the future of the statewide energy efficiency opportunities in Louisiana.

### EI2 Insulation Helps Anxious Pooch Find Calm in the Storm

People aren't the only ones who must endure the discomfort of a drafty room. As a recent letter sent to [Energy Impact Illinois](#) (EI2) contractor Anthony Stonis from customer Stephanie Marder points out, even man's best friend can benefit from the increased comfort of an air-sealing upgrade. Following is a short excerpt of Marder's letter describing how her wind-phobic dog, Marshall, went from sleepless to snoring after Stonis and his [crew](#) sealed her home's attic and basement:



Marshall and his favorite stuffed penguin are sleeping better in Marder's insulated home.

"During wind storms, Marshall would become upset. He would drool, drip from the nose, and was anxious. I thought it was something to do with a fear of

weather, but since you guys sealed the attic and basement, he has not reacted. I woke to a wind storm the other night expecting Marshall to be sitting on my pillow, but there he was snoring next to me. I can only guess that it had to do with some sound in the attic as the wind blew through. I find that the house retains heat longer and is warmer all over, and that is great. But the aspect of having a dog with peace of mind during the times the wind picks up was worth all the work you did and money I spent. Marshall and myself thank you."

Learn more about [EI2](#) and read other [homeowner successes](#) like these.

## Tools to Build Better Buildings

### New Resources Increase Access to Energy Data

Three new resources made available by the Energy Department and other organizations are helping energy efficiency programs and policymakers analyze, visualize, and share energy data:



FRED allows users across the country to compare their state's energy use to other states.

- The Department's new [Buildings Performance Database](#) is the largest free public database on energy performance of American buildings, with data from more than 60,000 homes and commercial buildings across the country. Users can access energy performance data and perform statistical analyses based on building size, location, age, function, and electricity and fuel consumption.
- As part of the [Energy Data Initiative](#), the Department, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, and Planetary Skin Institute produced a new, public tool called [Free Energy Data](#) (FRED) that offers better visualization of user energy statistics. FRED makes it easier for local governments, private industry, and other energy researchers to analyze and compare user energy statistics.
- Another tool, the [Regional Energy Efficiency Database](#) (REED), provides access to energy efficiency program data, including energy efficiency and peak demand savings, costs, avoided emissions, and job impacts. The REED database allows users to generate and download reports showing the impacts of utility customer-funded energy efficiency programs in Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

## Reports Reading List

From home energy upgrade program design to state energy initiative evaluations, these recent reports and white papers can help programs find solutions:

- [Energy Retrofit Field Study and Best Practices in a Hot-Humid Climate](#) examines opportunities and shares best practices for implementing energy efficiency upgrades as part of major home renovations, particularly in the Southeast (The Energy Department's Building Technologies Program, March

2013).

- [Leaders of the Pack: American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy's \(ACEEE's\) Third National Review of Exemplary Energy Efficiency Programs](#) identifies and profiles 63 leading programs that span the wide array of energy efficiency program types offered to utility customers, including key trends and observations that emerged from reviewing programs nominated for consideration in ACEEE's national review (ACEEE, June 2013).
- [Partnering With Utilities and Other Ratepayer-Funded Energy Efficiency Program Administrators](#) discusses ways to leverage funding and coordinate efforts for greater impact with utility and other energy efficiency program administrators (The Department and Oak Ridge National Laboratory, May 2013).
- [Residential Energy Use Disclosure: A Review of Existing Policies](#) explores the four main types of energy use disclosure being implemented in the United States and shares several studies on the effectiveness of longstanding residential energy performance rating programs (ACEEE, April 2013).
- [State Clean Energy Actions: 2012 Update](#) provides summary data and highlights of recent state-level activity in such categories as energy efficiency, lead-by-example initiatives, and clean energy economic development (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, April 2013). The [State Clean Energy Actions Database](#), released in conjunction with this report, can be used to identify trends in regional policy and find ideas for promoting clean energy actions at the local level.

## Share the View

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