

2012 BECC Conference: Poster Presenter Abstracts

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Occupant Engagement: How to Foster a Culture of Conservation in Non-Profit Buildings

Maintenance and design flaws are common reasons to miss a buildings savings goal, but the most difficult variable to control is occupant behavior. By making the occupants aware of their impact on the potential energy savings, the outcomes of the project do not solely rely on the predicted savings of the energy model. After four years of managing an energy efficiency grant program for nonprofits, our organization has learned through trial and error the best practices for weaving occupant behavior education seamlessly into our program. Over the years occupant behavior has moved from an afterthought to the central hub of our program because as funding disappears it will be conservation efforts that will carry us into the future. The non-profit staff we work with are dedicated to their service mission and have limited time to focus on what's plugged in, turned up, and running constantly. Through our program we empower each nonprofit's green team to create motivating goals, to reach these goals by effectively engaging their community to address behavior change and to promote their successes through recognition and incentives. This presentation will cover the necessary steps to incorporate occupant behavior into your programs and how to develop a solid program for your own facility. Topics will include what key components make a green team successful, how to utilize building data to motivate staff and effective ways to move engagement from a few dedicated individuals to the entire building community.