

2012 BECC Conference: Poster Presenter Abstracts

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Commercial Upgrade Programs: Which Businesses Participate? – Part II

Humans may not be rational economic creatures, but businesses are, right? Highly incentivized rebate programs aimed at commercial energy efficiency should be widely adopted by businesses. But is that true and, if not, what are the characteristics of the businesses that do participate, versus those that do not? As part of the US DoE's Better Buildings Neighborhood Program, Energize Phoenix aims to increase the energy efficiency of a specific geographic zone along the city's light rail corridor by matching incentives already provided through a utility demand reduction program. Arizona State University's Global Institute of Sustainability is conducting research to compare the demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral characteristics of the diverse pool of businesses that have elected to participate, to those of the businesses that have not. Findings suggest that there are several diverse factors that appear to influence participation. Some include property ownership (with agency implications for lease structures, program marketing and/or policy), percent of energy-related overhead costs, and perceptions (true or not) of the energy efficiency of other businesses. These findings should help utilities, policy-makers, and others design successful energy efficiency interventions that are targeted toward quickly converting those businesses that are already inclined to participate, as well as tailoring new programs to overcome barriers for those who are less likely to participate. Very preliminary findings were presented in a poster session at BECC 2011. This is a mid-program follow-up as the program has expanded widely in the past year and much more has been learned.