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Author Name: Mersiha McClaren

Author Company: Research Into Action

Second Author's Name: Steve Phoutrides

Abstract Title: Changing Industrial Energy Behavior Via Education: Case Study of an Energy Efficiency Refrigeration Certification

Abstract Text:

Complementing the many energy efficiency programs that focus on improving equipment efficiency, education is a key behavioral-based approach that can affect energy consumption in two ways: by changing how customers operate and maintain equipment, and encouraging customers to invest in high efficiency equipment. This paper presents the early outcomes of one such behavioral approach. A program administrator, in collaboration with other stakeholders, has developed and is promoting the Certified Refrigeration Energy Specialist (CRES) designation. CRES aims to encourage refrigeration professionals to master practical, no-cost or low-cost behavioral solutions for optimizing equipment operation for efficiency. Based on results of research conducted to-date, this paper presents analysis of the theory behind the benefits of certification, how the certification will generate persistent savings, the appeal of the certification program, and the program's successes and challenges. On-site visits are underway with CRES-certified individuals to collect data to estimate energy savings resulting from refrigeration operation by these individuals. Market surveys have been completed with CRES certificants and non-certificants – both managers and operators, which revealed that the awareness and appeal of CRES is high, while adoption of the newly established CRES is low. Non-CRES certified operators and vendor survey respondents reported that refrigeration certifications are uncommon, and more than half of non-CRES certified individuals reported their company would not be willing to support employees attending or conducting CRES-related training and certification activities on company time. This feedback illuminates potential CRES adoption barriers and suggests a need to develop effective “value proposition” messages and/or support for CRES.