BECC 2016
Energy Trust of Oregon

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Collaborating with Progressive Initiatives in Rural Oregon: Merging

- Community self-directed energy initiatives
  - Right Timing: keeping up, saving, proactive
  - Climate change; Green & Solar Tours
  - Addressing energy seems “doable”

- Energy Trust of Oregon
  - Regional Outreach Managers
  - Pilot with Americorp RARE
  - Diversity Initiative

- Sustainable NW rural energy program outreach for community workshops
The “Perfect Storm” for Community Energy Initiatives
Rural Community Characteristics

- Non-ubiquitous
- Conservative
- Older, and aging faster
- Less racially diverse
- Less formal education
- Lower income/spending
- Greater poverty
Sustainable Northwest

Our vision for community energy:

- A clean energy economy
- Stable and affordable power
- Renewable and energy efficient infrastructure
- Secure living wage jobs for rural people
About

• Independent nonprofit

• Serving 1.5 million customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural and Cascade Natural Gas

• Helping utility customers:
  • Save energy
  • Invest in renewable energy resources

• Building a stronger Oregon and SW Washington
14 Years of Affordable Energy

From Energy Trust’s investment of $1.3 billion in utility customer funds:

- **Nearly 600,000 sites** transformed into energy efficient, healthy, comfortable and productive homes and businesses

- **9,200 clean energy systems** generating renewable power from the sun, wind, water, geothermal heat and biopower

- **$5.6 billion** in savings over time on participant utility bills from their energy-efficiency and solar investments

- **17.4 million tons of carbon dioxide** emissions kept out of our air, equal to removing 3 million cars from our roads for a year
Workshops: Making Energy Work for Rural Oregon

They have: momentum, interest, ideas, commitment
They need: a plan and someone to carry it out
AmeriCorps RARE Resource Assistance for Rural Environments

- Univ of Oregon’s program placing graduate-level members in Oregon’s rural communities
- Add capacity to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions while gaining community building and leadership skills
Fall Symposium: Sharing Lessons Learned

- Collaborate to maximize limited time and funding
- Engage a wide range of volunteers and keep them active
- Keep momentum going with events and activities
- Be ready when opportunities arise
“There are typically not a lot of rural voices when the policy discussions are happening and policy decisions are being made.”

- Build relationships to build trust
- Daunting to be the first – helpful to have external partners and others as support and connection to other communities
Working Collaboratively with Rural Communities and Partners

- **Leverage**: SNW and community efforts
- **Engage**: Application for workshop
- **Inform/Educate**: Community Workshop
- **Build Capacity**: AmeriCorps RARE
- **Share**: Lessons Learned; Vision
- **Evolve**: Projects; Plans; Savings
Collaborating with Progressive Initiatives in Rural Oregon

• Rural - Urban
• Capacity issues often key
• “Everyone knows everyone”
• It’s always about people
• Support what is already underway
• Nurture and grow partnerships
• Be patient; Do the work to gain trust
• Expect results in the longer term
What’s Next

• Deeper efforts within current communities
• Extend to new communities
• Expanded engagement to underutilizing customers, populations, communities
• Ongoing refinement of strategies
• Continued collaborative approach
Thank You
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