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Title: Let's Link Up: Water-Energy Nexus Programs

Abstract: Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) will present on its successful and unique combined-resources efforts with local energy utilities, Southern California Edison (SCE) and SoCalGas. By packaging water and energy efficiency device retrofits together, over 2,500 homes have benefitted from IRWD, SCE, and SoCalGas' no-cost, direct-install programs since 2017. Although program participants were not required to replace all devices that were offered through the programs, the majority of participants ultimately received both water and energy devices. Qualified customers of the first program iteration were eligible to receive various high efficiency indoor water and energy devices during the same visit, while the outdoor water measure was installed by a different contractor. The second program iteration was simplified to just two devices, the installation of smart, weather-based irrigation controllers and a smart thermostat. Qualified customers were eligible to receive installation by the same contractor, making it a true "one-stop shop." Because outdoor water use accounts for approximately 60% of all water demand, controlling outdoor irrigation is crucial to saving water. The smart controller receives data from weather stations allowing it to automatically shut off during rain events or adjust the watering schedule seasonally. Program participants now have the opportunity to control their water and energy demands with the ease of a phone or computer app. The success of these water-energy programs is a result of reaching a consensus on program design and workflows that satisfy all agencies. A strategic marketing approach was employed to identify customers with the highest savings potential for all three resources - water, natural gas, and electricity. This approach yielded the biggest bang for the buck. Marketing for both programs emphasized customer convenience by submitting one application to a single point of contact. The strategic program marketing approach really got people talking which led to 41% and 29% of the total program registrations resulting from a "word of mouth" phenomenon for the first and second program, respectively. Registrants that did not receive marketing material had their application screened to determine program eligibility. Although this group was not identified to have the highest savings potential, the "word of mouth" cost \$0 in marketing and still resulted in resource savings. IRWD will discuss the success of forming partnerships with the two energy utilities, an overview of the program process, over-coming customer data sharing hurdles, water and energy savings results, customer satisfaction results, and lessons learned.