Energy Trust of Oregon
851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1200
Portland, Oregon 97204

Telephone: 1.866.368.7878
Facsimile: 503.546.6862
energytrust.org

EnergyTrust of Oregon

MEMO

Date: May 5, 2010
To: Board of Directors
From: Philipp Degens, Evaluation Manager
Amber Cole, Director of Communications and Customer Service
Subject: Staff Response to the Corvallis Energy Challenge Process Evaluation

The Corvallis Energy Challenge was Energy Trust's first long-term community collaboration project. Energy Trust had sought such a community collaborator for a considerable time. One of the main drivers of this had been the idea that community collaborations could provide an effective delivery mechanism for energy efficiency. In some earlier discussions, the potential for community collaborations to be a major low cost delivery option was also raised.

Given that the search for a suitable community collaborator took a number of years, it may be optimistic to think that communities are readily available to be developed as a major general delivery channel for energy efficiency and renewables. The Corvallis experience also indicates that collaborating and coordinating with a community can require significant Energy Trust resources both in the area of Energy Trust and PMC staff time as well as increased program funding. This is not to say that Energy Trust will not collaborate with communities in the future, but should enter into these collaborations aware of the attendant additional needs.

Energy Trust program participation data did indicate an increase in program activity during the Energy Challenge. The increased activity was not associated with those customers directly touched by Energy Challenge activities and therefore could not be attributed to the program. In the event of another community collaboration, Evaluation recommends surveying a sample of Energy Trust program participants within that community to gauge the influence of the community program on their participation in Energy Trust programs. Evaluation will also consider looking at the persistence of program influence over time as Energy Challenge, though lasting only one year, may have influence on decisions in later years.

Energy Trust now does more up-front planning when collaborating with communities. Community profiles are now developed and service/program recommendations have been made based on these profiles. Energy Trust is also moving more cautiously when pursuing longer term community collaborations. Given the resources required to collaborate in the Corvallis Energy Challenge, Energy Trust probably can only develop and implement one of these in-depth level collaborations every two years (one year of development and one year of implementation).

Energy Trust can also collaborate and participate in community projects at a more modest or focused level. Energy Trust offers a set of turnkey services/measures that can be configured to meet the varying community wants and needs. The “Solarize” PV initiatives that have sprung up are an example of tightly focused community-based programs that appear to be cost-effectively replicable. Other examples of services that are turn-key and stand alone that could be tailored to community based programs:

- Refrigerator recycling
- Kill-A-Watt® library loan
- Low income refrigerator rebates
- Community lighting retrofits
- Climate Master training