2010 Accomplishments: Solar

November 17, 2010

Projects

- PV: By the end of 2010, we expect to fund approximately 1,300 installations for 9 MW of new capacity. We expect to fully commit the 2010 PGE and Pacific Power budgets.
    - Nearly 40% of 2010 capacity will be residential, compared to 25% in 2009. Compared to 2009, residential activity increased 3 times and commercial capacity increased 1.25 times.
    - Approximately 55% of residential installations are part of a Solarize initiative.
- SWH: By the end of 2010, we expect to fund approximately 150 installations, representing 90% of 2009 volume.

Initiatives

- Supported 6 new, successful Solarize bulk-purchase efforts launched in NE Portland, SW Portland, SE Portland (phase 2), Pendleton, Salem and Beaverton.
- Participated in the first Solar Now! University, which provided information and tools to individuals from rural communities to help them encourage more solar installations and overcome local barriers. Five eastern Oregon communities were represented at the event, held in Pendleton. Solar Now! is a collaboration between Energy Trust, City of Portland, Solar Oregon and Oregon Department of Energy.
- Allowed high-volume contractors to enter solar electric incentive applications into PowerClerk, a web-based project tracking tool. This allowed program staff to handle dramatically higher volume of projects by reducing data entry burden and gave contractors and inspectors better visibility of the status of their active projects.
- Worked with Columbia Sportswear to launch an employee challenge called Lighten Our Load, encouraging employees to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy for their homes.
- Trained industrial program outreach contractors to assess opportunities for solar electric and solar water heating, in addition to energy efficiency, at industrial facilities.
- Promoted solar pool heating installations through a first-ever direct mail promotion to residential pool owners in the Portland metro area.

Market-building activities

- Provided input to OPUC, ODOE, Building Codes Division and the utilities to support their successful implementation of the feed-in tariff, RETC/BETC changes and a statewide solar code.
- Provided cooperative marketing incentives to solar contactors, which were fully utilized, resulting in greater quantity and quality of solar advertisements to consumers.

- Sponsored Solar Oregon's education and outreach programs including workshops, newsletters, home tours and solar ambassadors.
- CSG conducted over 600 Solar Energy Reviews, advising individuals about solar and efficiency opportunities in their homes.
- Sponsored the 5th annual NW Solar Expo, which was visited by 1,800 consumers and in which 200 contractors received PV and SWH installation and design training.
- Presented a technical paper on PV-thermal technology at the American Solar Energy Society conference, and another on the Solarize bulk-purchase model at the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy conference. Received "State Leadership in Clean Energy" award from Clean Energy States Alliance for the Solarize initiative.

2010 market factors

- In January the BETC program was capped, and PV projects larger than approx. 75 kW had to wait until July to compete against other projects for a BETC. Very few solar projects received BETC awards.
- As a result of the BETC risk, the market for 3rd party-owned commercial PV installations, which dominated the market in 2009, dried up. Roughly half of committed commercial projects were canceled.
- 3rd party-owned residential installations did not take off as expected because they were determined to be ineligible for BETC.
- Feed-in tariff incentives for PV were launched as an alternative to Energy Trust and state tax credits. The capacity allocations made available in July and October sold out within minutes.
- RETC rules changed in July, reducing the value of RETC for small, low-cost residential PV systems (like those installed through Solarize efforts.) Projects grandfathered under the old rules must be completed by end of year, creating great urgency and short term hiring by the contractors.
- A statewide solar code for PV installations was approved, creating permitting guidelines that may help standardize processes across different jurisdictions.