

Puget Sound Energy's innovative Resource Conservation Manager (RCM) program is designed to help large commercial organizations obtain energy savings through behavioral changes, operational improvements, facility maintenance, and utility cost and usage accounting. Since 2003, Puget Sound Energy's Resource Conservation Manager (RCM) program has provided more than \$4 million in funding to support the placement of 70 RCMs throughout the utility's 11-county combined electric and natural gas service area for a combined savings of 80 million kWh of electricity and 2.5 million therms of natural gas.

Building operations managers for large commercial organizations recognize the potential of reducing energy costs and usage by improving operational and maintenance (O&M) practices. However, financial obligations, time and staffing constraints, as well as reluctance to change institutional practices can create significant barriers to implementation.

The RCM program was developed in recognition of the untapped savings for customers from improved O&M practices, and PSE expanded its commercial and industrial energy efficiency programs to provide financial and technical assistance to accommodate this and attribute energy savings to behavioral and operational based programs, a unique role for a utility company to play. The RCM program is available to any school district, public-sector government agency, or commercial or industrial customer, with a focus on larger customers with multiple facilities. A large majority of participating customers are government agencies and school districts, whose energy savings and lower bills have a direct positive impact for local tax payers.

PSE's RCM program provides support to help these customers overcome the barriers to implementation by providing grants, classes for the RCM and facilities staff, energy and resource accounting software, electronic downloads to minimize data entry and on-site technical assistance. The RCM program also provides assistance with initial program organization, savings projections and goals, job postings, interview and hiring, and resource accounting software support. Energy and resource accounting is the core of the RCM program, helping customers collect and organize resource data needed to determine their carbon footprint, benchmark efficiency of their facilities, and track progress of their efforts. Using resource accounting tools, the RCM program generates measurable savings for the utility as well as provides validation of estimated savings of installed capital measures.

The RCM program's value comes from making many small changes with little to no investment in equipment. These can result in 10 to 15 percent reductions in energy usage, and dollars saved from these programs can be redirected to other needs. RCM activities often lead to identification of additional capital measures and offer participants an opportunity to take advantage of PSE's commercial and industrial efficiency grant programs.

Through the RCM program, energy savings are achieved by providing portfolio customers with the resources needed to fund a position that focuses on mitigating the customer's use of natural resources, including electricity, natural gas, oil, propane, water, sewer, garbage and recycling. The individual RCM funding support from PSE is based on a three-year agreement with the organization and the utility. Once hired by the participating organization, the RCM is trained by PSE and responsible to demonstrate a minimum 5 percent reduction in energy use by the end of the agreement term.

PSE's RCM Program supports innovative resource management for organizations that function in the public's interest, job creation both internally and for customers, and practices that lessen environmental impact of participating facilities in more ways than energy use. The benefit is seen not only by the customers that sign up for the program but for the larger organizations and community they serve.