

ENERGY STAR – Consumers Energy – RETAP Success Story

The simple
choice for
energy
efficiency.



Energy Efficiency Program Sponsor Partner

Consumers Energy

212 West Michigan Avenue, Jackson, MI 49201

Business: Electric and Natural Gas Provider

Amy Glapinski, Program Manager

Phone: 517-262-8206

Email: Amy.Glapinski@CMSEnergy.com

Professional Engineer Service Provider

Retired Engineer Technical Assistant Program (RETAP)

C/O Michigan Agency for Energy

7109 W. Saginaw Highway, Lansing, MI 48917

Business: Onsite pollution prevention, energy efficiency, and water conservation audits

David Herb, RETAP Manager

Phone: 517-284-6863

Email: herbd@michigan.gov

Consumers Energy and Michigan RETAP worked to increase recognition for energy efficient buildings by reducing the cost of ENERGY STAR certification process.

Project Summary

Consumers Energy provides electric and natural gas service to nearly 6.6 million of Michigan's 10 million residents, in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties. Since 2009, Consumers Energy has offered comprehensive electric and gas energy efficiency programs, which have helped customers achieve \$1 billion in savings. Consumers Energy looks to build on its existing program portfolio by piloting and implementing new and innovative efficiency programs.

In 2015, Consumers Energy teamed up with Michigan's Retired Engineer Technical Assistance Program (RETAP), an organization that provides comprehensive onsite pollution prevention, water conservation, and energy efficiency assessments to small manufacturers in Michigan, to offer third-party verification for customers pursuing ENERGY STAR certification for qualified buildings. The third-party verifications, which are required for certification, were completed by retired engineers in partnership with Consumers and at no cost to customers.

- **Scope** - Offered free third-party verification for customers pursuing Certification for qualified buildings.
- **Deliverables** - In addition to the recognition materials provided by ENERGY STAR, Consumers Energy provided all certified participants with a custom-ordered plaque for display in the building.
- **Implementation Considerations** - The engineers in RETAP worked as independent contractors and were required to go through training, including Portfolio Manager trainings. Consumers Energy screened the building certification candidates in its territory and provided a prescreened list to the engineers, who then help the selected buildings go through the application process, including making a site visit to complete the third-party verification requirement. Once the building became ENERGY STAR certified, Consumers provided a \$1,000 flat rate to the engineer. Consumers allowed for the same building to be incentivized two years in a row, but at a lower incentive rate of \$500 per certified building in the second year.
- **Results** – The effort successfully increased the number of new ENERGY STAR certifications in Consumers' territory at a relatively low price. The pilot started in late 2015 and completed 7 certifications, two which gained the 2015 label and 5 which earned the 2016 label. In 2016, the pilot helped an additional 51 buildings become ENERGY STAR certified, for a total of 56 incentivized 2016 certifications. The vast majority of the buildings benefiting from the program were first-time ENERGY STAR certified buildings. These buildings consisted mainly of K-12 Schools that were benchmarked through Consumers Energy's other pilot and specialty programs that utilize ENERGY STAR benchmarking. The certifications from the pilot program greatly increased the number of certifications for Consumers Energy customers, nearly doubling the number of certifications completed before the pilot began in 2015.

Consumers Energy continued the Program through 2017, with participant certifications exceeding 100 buildings for the year. One initiative to help expand the program in 2017 was to include ENERGY STAR Benchmarking in the Consumers Energy Small Business Energy Assessment Program, specifically targeted at houses of worship. This resulted in over 100 worship facility benchmarks, and over 30 certifications of these facilities, which amounts to nearly three-quarters of all the worship facility certifications nationwide in 2017. In addition, the utility is considering expanding the incentive to all customers by offering a flat \$1,000 rebate for customers that become certified using a different firm for third-party verification.

ENERGY STAR is the simple choice for energy efficiency. For more than 25 years, EPA's ENERGY STAR program has been America's resource for saving energy and protecting the environment. Join the millions making a difference at energystar.gov