

Energy Depot User's Group Meeting Notes November 1, 2006

Attendees/Call ins: Keith Hardt, Washington; Kim Weaver, Rocky Mount, Andy Osborne, High Point; John Whisner, High Point, Robbie Tugwell, ElectriCities; Phil Bisesi, ElectriCities; Angie Harris, Newton; Paul Conlan, Energy Depot

Marketing employed by cities:

Washington, Rocky Mount and High Point have all used bill stuffers to market Energy Depot. Rocky Mount and Washington both issued press releases, but the paper did not pick them up and run stories. Elizabeth City did contact the paper and an article did appear in the local paper there. The impact was big as Energy Depot received 136 hits that month via their city website, the largest for any city under the ElectriCities program (High Point has had more in the year previous to coming under the EC program).

Members agreed that a bill stuffer would be valuable, especially if it could be tailored to their own utility website.

Members also agreed that a local radio ad, generic in format, would be valuable if the customer could eventually be brought to the local city website via the ElectriCities Energy Depot link. EC will work with Energy Depot to make sure this is possible.

Both Rocky Mount and High Point have Energy Depot on their cable info channel that runs on a tv at city hall (High Point).

Paul Conlan of Energy Depot emphasized that **where** you place the energy depot link on your website will greatly influence the number of hits. He added that even though many utilities are summer peaking, that the maximum number of hits typically occurs in the winter.

What customers/staff like about Energy Depot:

The energy comparison tool was mentioned several times as being of value to both customers and staff. Angie Harris of Newton said a customer wrote them an email saying they liked the lighting evaluation available through the energy comparison tool.

Kim Weaver said she ran some profiles for typical homes and found the estimates generated by Energy Depot were very close to the actuals.

Andy Osborne reported that the customer service reps that work in the call center say they are able to reduce their call times from customers if they can walk them through and /or refer them to Energy Depot.

What customers/staff don't like:

Some customers have complained about the length of time it takes to complete a full audit. Others, however, have remarked they like the thoroughness of the audit.

Web Hits

Most cities have seen a progressive increase in use over the months. Elizabeth City had 136 hits in a month where an article appeared in the local newspaper. A copy of the article was shared with the group.

Paul Conlan shared some customer websites that he thought were particularly good that led to a high number of hits.

Atmosenergy.com
Cobbemc.com
Cityutilities.net
Les.com