

Draft Meeting Summary
COG Ad Hoc Energy and Climate Outreach Committee
April 15, 2010

Presents

Jay Fiset, Supervisor, Arlington County
Christina Twomey, Public Affairs, Maryland Energy Administration
Andy Farmer, Education Resource Manager, Virginia State Corporation Commission
Sharon Cooke, Director, Community Outreach, District Department of the Environment
Tracye Funn, Office of Sustainability, Washington Gas
Debbie Jarvis, VP Corporate Communications, Pepco
Irene Cimino, Dominion, Manager, Corporate Public Relations
Mernie Fitzgerald, Director, Public Affairs, Fairfax County
Stuart Freudberg, COG, Director, Department of Environmental Programs
Joan Rohlf, Chief COG Air Quality Planning, COG DEP
Anne Mariani, Environmental Planner, COG DEP

Attachments :

- 1- CEEPC 2012 work plan and list of priority actions
- 2- Updated matrix of existing programs in the Washington region

1. Introductions and Task Force Goals

Chair Fiset recalled that this workgroup is created to respond to respond to Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) direction to formulate a regional outreach and education campaign. This recommendation was adopted in January 2010 as a part of CEEPC 2010-2012 work plan and identified as a priority action for 2010 (attachment 1). The group's findings and proposals will be presented at next CEEPC meeting on May 26.

Ms. Fitzgerald asked how a regional program would add value to already numerous outreach programs in the region. Ms. Twomey said the objective should be to leverage all the existing messages and to reduce confusion for the public.

Ms. Cooke said that the funding opportunities on DC DOE side were limited. However, in future ARRA funding opportunities, a State application with money passed through to the region could be an option. She may also be able to negotiate free media space as DOE recently conducted large campaigns in the media (the shopping bag campaign for instance).

Mr. Fiset pointed out that the first step was to define what a regional outreach program may look like, and then it will be easier to discuss the funding strategy.

2. Regional Campaign – Example Approaches

Ms. Mariani gave an overview of outreach programs in the Washington region and outside. Two types of programs seem especially interesting:

- Energy challenges and competitions (between neighborhoods, communities, jurisdictions etc.) based on social marketing techniques
- Branding programs: visual identity, umbrella message used by several partners, "energy clearinghouse" website.

To have a better understanding of all programs in the region, participants asked that the table be completed with the goal and message of each program.

3. Overview of outreach programs in the Washington region

Participants provided an overview of their existing and anticipated outreach campaigns.

DC (Sharon Cooke): DC has launched its plastic bag campaign, which includes a message on how not using plastic bags helps saving energy. Next campaign will be on DC's appliance rebates program starting on May 1. DC DOE will also participate in WJLA Home Energy Makeover contest.

Virginia SCC (Andy Farmer): Virginia General Assembly adopted a goal of reducing energy use 10% below 2006 by 2022. To support this goal, VA SCC is embarking on a five-year consumer education program "Virginia Energy Sense". It is now in the market research stage. Web resources are being developed in parallel. The campaign will include a grassroots component in partnership with local governments, universities etc. and an advertisement campaign. As part of Virginia's recently adopted decoupling policy, utilities are also required to develop energy conservation programs.

MEA (Christina Twomey): As part of Governor O'Malley's EmPOWER Maryland initiative, MEA has been running an outreach campaign mainly targeted at the residential sector. The message was "15 energy tips to save energy 15% by 2015". The campaign relied both on traditional and social media, and on grassroots initiatives. A statewide phone survey has been done pre and post-campaign.

Dominion (Irene Cimino): Dominion has launched a campaign on wind power that has been on TV since January. They also lead a grassroots effort on energy conservation, with educational grants for schools for example. An energy calculator is available online on their website. Another area of focus is Dominion's smart grid pilot project in Charlottesville. This project will require a lot of consumer education on advanced meters and time-of-use rates.

Washington Gas (Tracye Funn): Washington Gas is currently running an advertisement campaign. They'll have another one in fall to encourage people using wood to switch to gas. The specificity of Washington Gas is that they are marketing a product – gas as a clean energy source, which makes their message a bit different from electric utilities.

PEPCO (Debbie Jarvis): Pepco is running an advertisement campaign called "What's on?" under the Empower Maryland umbrella.

4. Discussion: Opportunities for regional campaign

The participants agreed on the following points regarding a regional campaign:

- The goal of the program should be to **amplify the effect of existing programs**,
- In terms of **message**, climate change is too controversial, and energy conservation too environmentalist. Market research conducted for Virginia Sense shows that people are responsive to the "be wise/ reduce waste" message.
- Communicating on **energy savings or energy efficiency** is a way to "reconcile the two sides of the household" (the environmentalist and the pragmatic sides). Energy security doesn't talk much to people, except when it comes to gasoline consumption.
- The regional program should aim for **behavior change** (and not just general awareness).
- It should have a **grassroots approach**, which implies to identify active community groups, arm them with the "right tools" (train them on the programs that are already available), and send them out to carry our message,

- The grassroots approach should be complemented by a campaign on **social media**, (eg: upload the video of yourself changing a light bulb on You Tube and compete with others for the number of video uploaded)
- At first sight, a quantitative energy or GHG **goal** is too confusing, especially since each state has its own. If we want a quantitative goal, it would be better to talk about a more concrete goal (number of homes retrofitted, number of household saving x% energy etc).
- The program should aim at **making it easy** for people to take action. The idea of a **check-list of actions** is good, and easy to plug into a challenge program,
- A way to effectively **measure results** is needed.

In addition, Christina Twomey suggested contacting **Earth Aid** before next meeting for potential participation in a regional outreach program. Earth Aid (www.earthaid.net) is an energy efficiency software company that uses a rewards program.

Note: Earth Aid has been launched in DC mid-2009. It's a free web-based application for electric, gas and water bills. The customer links utility accounts to Earth Aid and gets rewards for saving energy (points that can be redeemed at local stores). This program is an incentive to recirculate disposable income (from energy savings) into the economy. It is compatible with all utilities in the Metro Washington area. In October 2009, Ben Bixby with Earth Aid gave a presentation to the members of MWCOG outreach work group. At that time, there were 46 vendors participating in the Washington region.

Next Meeting:

April 27, 2010 @ 11.30 am – 1:30 pm at MWCOG

Energy and Climate Education and Outreach programs in the Washington Region

Program type	Name	Goal	Audience	Message / program description	Website
Statewide campaign	Empower Maryland General Awareness Campaign - MEA	Reduce energy consumption 15% by 2015	Residential energy users	<p>"15 things that will empower you to save money and reduce energy consumption statewide 15% by 2015".</p> <p>Advertisement campaign, social media, grassroots campaign</p> <p>Empower MD = umbrella message supported by MEA and utilities' campaigns.</p>	http://www.energy.state.md.us/facts/empower/index.asp
Statewide campaign	Virginia Energy Sense – VA SCC	Reduce energy consumption 10% below 2006 by 2022	All	<p>5-year consumer education plan</p> <p>Market research + web development in process</p>	
Utility	Washington Gas	Promote gas as a clean energy source	All	Advertising campaign	
Utility	PEPCO	Support Empower MD goals	Residential	<p>Advertising campaign "What's on?" (under the Empower MD umbrella)</p> <p>Message: Small Steps Lead to Big Changes = simple ways to conserve energy and save money.</p>	http://www.pepco.com/welcome/news/advertising/default.aspx
Utility	Dominion	Raise awareness on Dominion's commitment to wind power	All	Wind power advertisement campaign	http://www.dom.com/about/advertising/index.jsp
Local	Green DC		All	DC Sustainability agenda	http://green.dc.gov
Local	AIRE – Arlington County	Reduce GHG emissions by 10% from 2000 to 2012	All	Local energy and climate action plan	http://www.co.arlington.va.us/portals/topics/Climate.aspx

Program type	Name	Goal	Audience	Message / program description	Website
Local	Montgomery County	Reduce GHG emissions by 80% by 2050	All	As a part of Montgo Co. Climate Protection Plan: -Launched: Green business certification program. -Planning stage: residential green guide, community energy leaders program.	http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dectmpl.asp?url=/Content/dep/climatechange/climateL2.asp
Local	EcoCity Alexandria		All	Alexandria Eco-City Charter and Environmental Action Plan	Eco-City Alexandria Blog
Local	Fairfax County		?	Outreach programs submitted in EECBG application.	http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/environment/county-energy-policy.htm
Local	Loudoun County		Business	As a part of the County Energy Strategy: -Green Business Challenge	http://www.loudoun.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=2363
Other – electricity provider	Green Neighborhood Effect Challenge - Clean Current	Encourage electricity consumers to switch to green power	Residential	Green power purchase neighborhood challenge. Clean Currents donates \$10 per household switching to green power, to be used for a community greening project.	http://www.cleancurrents.com/index.php/Green-Neighborhood-Effect
Other – non profit	Repower at Home – Alliance for Climate Protection	Reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions	Residential	Peer- driven home energy efficiency campaign	http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/a15aWFpd20100108075424.pdf
Other – TV channel	Home Energy Makeover Contest – ABC7 WJLA	Promote home energy improvements	Homeowners	Media-sponsored contest to win a full home energy retrofit	http://homeenergymakeover.org/nationalcapital.htm
Other – private company	Earth Aid DC	Reduce elec, gas, water consumption	Utilities' customers	Web-based tool to track energy consumption and get financial rewards (coupons) for demonstrated savings on energy bills	http://www.earthaid.net/