



Energy Smart Press Kit

Here are answers to some common questions about Energy Smart:

Q. What is Energy Smart?

A. Energy Smart is program run through the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's non-profit affiliate Minnesota Waste Wise. The program provides customized assistance to help Minnesota businesses and organizations reduce their energy usage. The program started as a pilot in late 2008 and received renewed funding January 2010.

Energy Smart's assistance is at no cost and is available to any business or organization in Minnesota.

Q. How is Energy Smart funded?

A. During its pilot phase, Energy Smart was funded through the conservation improvement programs of four investor-owned electric utilities in Minnesota: Xcel Energy, Minnesota Power, Otter Tail Power and Interstate Power & Light. Conservation improvement programs, or CIPs, are the plans utilities draft to promote customer energy savings. Utility CIP plans are reviewed and approved by the Minnesota Office of Energy Security.

Energy Smart is currently funded through a three-year funding commitment by Xcel Energy and Minnesota Power to help it meet the Next Generation Energy Act goals mandated by the state.

Q. What is Energy Smart's purpose?

A. Energy Smart's goal is to help businesses save money through energy efficiency. Utilities provide funding to the Energy Smart to help them meet the energy retail sales reduction goals set forth in the Next Generation Energy Act. The Act sets annual goals for energy retail sales reductions in Minnesota in order to help cut the state's greenhouse gas emissions.

Q. What services does Energy Smart provide businesses?

A. Energy Smart tailors its energy efficiency assistance to the individual needs of the businesses it serves. See below for a list of Energy Smart services.



Energy Smart services include:

- **On-site energy consultations.** Energy Smart will examine a business's facilities and equipment and help identify that business's top energy-saving opportunities. Those opportunities range from no- and low-cost steps, such as enabling power-saving mode on office computers or installing occupancy sensors in restrooms, to upgrading to high-efficiency lighting or heating and cooling systems. Each business receives immediately receives formal notes detailing that business's top energy-saving opportunities, along with guidelines on how to implement the opportunities. Energy Smart also refers businesses to ancillary services such as a full utility energy audit or lighting upgrade as needed.
- **Phone consultations.** Energy Smart provides no-cost phone consultation to businesses interested in evaluating their energy-saving opportunities or to those with specific questions or concerns about their energy use.
- **Funding assistance.** Energy Smart can help businesses identify financial incentives available to them for energy upgrades. These can include utility rebates, federal, state and local grants or tax credits and low-interest loans.
- **Utility bill analysis.** When provided with 12 months of utility bills, Energy Smart will put together an analysis of the site's utility use and expenses to help the business identify possible saving opportunities.
- **Energy Star Building Rating Assistance.** Energy Smart helps businesses enter their building data into the benchmarking system and pursue an Energy Star label.
- **Community Focus campaigns.** Energy Smart will help local business organizations in a specific community mobilize their members toward energy efficiency. Energy Smart will contact businesses in the community individually and offer site visits and other assistance.
- **Energy efficiency workshops.** Energy Smart partners with local chambers of commerce, economic development groups and business associations to host informational workshops for businesses on the benefits of energy efficiency.

Q. How many businesses has Energy Smart assisted?

A. Energy Smart has assisted more than 5,000 Minnesota businesses with various energy-efficiency concerns and conducted site visits at more than 400.

Member of the media and have other questions about Energy Smart? Contact Program Director Jill Curran at (651) 292-4653.