



Lac Courte Oreilles Band Of Lake Superior Ojibwe

- Sustaining the natural and economical resources Final Report

Presented to

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Project Data

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Sustaining the Natural and Economic resources of the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe

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Recipient Organization: LCO Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe

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Partners: Department of Energy

Jump River Electrical Co-op

Business Partners: Building Science Academy

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Acknowledgements

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Michelle Broome, Lac Courte Oreilles Comptroller

We would also like to thank the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Governing Board Members, Past and Present, who have supported this project. Their vision of reduced energy consumption and the sustainability of our own resources were a driving factor in the application, award and completion of this Project.

We would like to thank all the tribal elders and members that have helped make this project a success by letting our crews into their homes and enter their lives to access information needed to accomplish our goals.

Lastly we would like to acknowledge and remember Leslie Isham whose untimely passing while managing this project left a void that was virtually impossible to fill. She was extremely instrumental in the success of this and other grants awarded to the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe. Her selfless dedication, countless hours and desire to make our tribe energy efficient and self-sustaining will continue on through others. She is and will continue to be missed by all that knew her.

Summary

The Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, located in northwest Wisconsin has developed a project, entitled Sustaining the Natural and Economic Resources of the LCO Ojibwe. LCO intends to create a Weatherization Center with the ultimate goal of assuring that the resources of Nokomis aki-in which have nourished our lives as Ojibwe people are there for future generations. Objectives which will bring us closer to that goal are:

- Minimum of 20 persons trained to assess and implement weatherization tasks
- Reduction in the use and cost of home heating and electricity by at least 25% for each family served by an LCO weatherization crew;
- Increase in the level of community awareness of the importance of home energy conservation and strategies for implementation; and
- Completion of a plan for a self-supported Weatherization Center to serve this area of the state.

In 2005, the LCO Tribe committed to meeting the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol and pledged to enable and require that reservation communities secure a percentage of their energy needs from renewable sources. In 2006, the Tribe developed and adopted an LCO Comprehensive Plan, which established several goals for future energy use including the goal of securing at least 25% of the Tribe's energy needs with renewable resources within the decade. This pledge is very similar to one adopted by the State of Wisconsin.

The Lac Courte Oreilles Conservation, Grants, Elders and Public Works Departments worked together to identify a program that would help sustain tribal natural resources and protect the economic future of our people. With the assistance of the Department of Energy we were able to invest in the human capital of our tribal members and train some of them in weatherization practices that will continue to impact our reservation for many years after this program is finished.

In our goals to sustain the tribes natural and economic resources energy conservation was identified as a best point of action. This project was instrumental in promoting these goals by training tribal members to assess and determine the best weatherization functions to help each homeowner or tribal enterprise. The lasting effects to the tribe include the community education of tribal members, training of weatherization crew members, reduced overall tribal energy cost, creation of jobs and economic opportunities, and the incorporation of energy conserving designs and appliances into the future development and construction activities on the reservation.

This project was a success in that it provided training to tribal members in the field of weatherization to help reduce energy cost and saving money while reducing the tribal carbon footprint. We educated many tribal members about ways to reduce energy consumption through publications and public meetings that provided additional information. Over twenty five homes and multiple enterprises were audited and weatherized during this program. Other enterprises were given options to help reduce the level of energy consumption in their buildings.

Activities

Leslie Isham was hired to manage this project after the initial coordinator was unable to fulfill the duties that were required. Under her supervision the activities under the work plan were started and completed as follows.

- Identify and contract tribal members to participate in the weatherization training program.
- Contracted with Building Science Academy to provide onsite training and certify the crew members in weatherization theory, applications and practices.
- Sought bids and purchased equipment and supplies needed to perform weatherization audits and remediation.
- Locate homes and buildings to carryout hands on learning and weatherization practices on the reservation.
- Sought and delivered resources for trainees and tribal members to promote individual learning and economic assistance and educational options.
- Develop and implement educational publications for tribal members to promote conserving energy and other cost saving measures.
- Develop power point presentations for tribal community meetings and the annual Department of Energy tribal meeting in Golden, Colorado.
- Create activity and financial reports as required under the acceptance of the DOE grant award.



Hands on Weatherization project development





Project Overview

This project was intended to provide a way to develop the human capacity to promote and carryout weatherization practices on the reservation. With the purpose of creating a tribal weatherization warehouse that would be self-sustaining as tribal members saw the cost savings benefits from homes that were weatherized during this project period.

The project included selecting and training tribal members, purchasing equipment and supplies, doing assessments of property, developing a weatherization plan of action and conduction of onsite weatherization to reduce the energy consumption and amount of financial resources spent on energy.

An ancillary goal of this project was to encourage tribal members to create a business plan around the weatherization certification and processes they acquired to start their own sustainable weatherization company that would be of service to community members.

The project coordinator and weatherization crew members provided numerous educational outreach events to the tribal community and elementary school through presentations and literature. Utilizing publications and websites from multiple sources like the DOE, EPA, Jump river co-op, and Wisconsin focus on energy.

Conclusions and summary

In 2009 the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe sought to follow up the first steps grant (2007) with another Department of Energy grant that would allow the tribe to implement some of the identified tasks and to increase the knowledge base of tribal members in energy consumption and conservation. The tribe also identified weatherization as a highly cost-effective way of reducing energy consumption and reducing the amount of financial resources used by the tribe. We also focused on reducing our carbon footprint and increase our alternative energy use. The tribe was awarded this grant in 2010 to begin training tribal members to carry out weatherization functions, conduct energy audits, educating the local population about energy conservation measures, and establishing a weatherization center. The tribe completed its goals and objectives in an extended period of time then first proposed.

There were many setbacks as the program developed but by and large the tribe has accomplished its goals through hard work and dedication of the weatherization crews. This program saw four different directors due to staffing changes, a death and a resignation. This confusion and extended period of service was noted and found to be an issue by the grants department and the Tribal Governing Board. Subsequently the tribe identified a need to develop stringent employment procedures for future grant management positions. They also will provide oversight of grant managers to monitor progress of the project and reporting validation to meet the requirements of future grants. In short the tribe learned that grant and project management is a highly accomplished trade that needs the attention of skilled and experienced employees.

Lessons Learned

The Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe had to learn some tough lessons during this grant period. Not just about weatherization and conservation of resources but about grant management, project oversight and personnel development as well. The tribe found out the hard way that the proper personnel choices need to be advocated when working with grants. Once the personnel are hired they need the technical support of other individuals with more experience.

We discovered the need for safety training for situations involving heights and confined space entry. While our crew members were able to finish projects in a satisfactory manner there were

concerns expressed about precarious situations where crew members felt they were not adequately trained. Some crew members also stated they would benefit from classes in electrical safety as well.

Scheduling of project work sites was also an issue throughout the grant period. Many home owners or building managers were not properly informed or were not able to comprehend the extent of access needed and the time required to conduct the audits and weatherization functions. Keeping alternative sites available will help reduce time lost due to unforeseen issues with access in the future.

The weatherization center was never realized as described in the grant proposal. The downturn of the economy made it impossible to develop a financially sustainable weatherization center. We have adapted our plan to create a weatherization equipment loaner program. We let tribal community members use weatherization equipment free of charge to carry out various weatherization functions on their homes. We have a list of trained and certified weatherization professionals that are willing to assist with energy audits and weatherization plans. Financial limitations are acknowledged and the most cost effective solutions are identified. In this manner the tribe is still conserving natural and economic resources, public education is ongoing and our certified weatherization crew members are still providing services and learning and gaining experience with every project they do.

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