

Stor4Build Project Updates TES with HVAC to enable a decarbonized grid

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Stor4Build Annual Meeting

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Thermal Storage-ready Heat Pumps to Reduce Peak Demand

Stor4Build Project Update Session 8: TES with HVAC to Enable a Decarbonized Grid

Kyle Gluesenkamp, Bo Shen, Yiyuan Qiao, Lingshi Wang, Xiaobing Liu, Zhenning Li, Yifeng Hu, William Doktycz Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Agenda

- Options for combining TES with HP
- Simulation to show technology potential and guide materials development
- Experimental progress
- Next steps

What about thermal storage?







National scale of storage

- The US electric grid: about 1 TW electrical power
- Example: store 100% of 1 TW for 24 hours: 24 TWh energy
- This equates to an average of:
 - 88 kWh per residential building and
 - 2.16 MWh per commercial building
 - (assuming each sector has half the nation's storage).
- At rate of \$11.5k installed per 13.5 kWh Li-ion battery, this implies **\$20T**:
 - \$75,000 per residential building with Li-ion
 - \$1,840,000 per commercial building with Li-ion

Innovation to lower cost is needed

How to implement TES with HPs?



Thermodynamic options for TES-HP



Energy and demand limits for HP-mediated TES-HP



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Energy and demand limits for HP-mediated TES-HP

Calculated using realistic model of vapor compression cycle

Heating (14°F day)

Cooling (104°F day)



Figures generated using DOE/ORNL HPDM using the methodology described in:

Jason Hirschey, Zhenning Li, Kyle R. Gluesenkamp, Tim J. LaClair, Samuel Graham (2023) "Demand Reduction and Energy Saving Potential of Thermal Energy Storage Integrated Heat Pumps" International Journal of Refrigeration https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijrefrig.2023.01.026

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Informs direction of materials development



Horizontal error bars: extrema in reported melting temperature Vertical error bars: extrema in reported material cost *and* melting enthalpy

Salt Hydrates
Fatty Acids
Fatty Alcohols
Water
Paraffin (sol-liq)

Notable Labels:

- AC1 Formic Acid
- AC6 Acetic Acid
 - H9 Calcium Chloride Hexahydrate
- H11 Sodium Sulfate Decahydrate

Figure adapted from:

- 1. Manuscript submitted to journal
- Hirschey, Jason R.; Navin Kumar, Tugba Turnaoglu, Kyle R. Gluesenkamp, Samuel Graham (2021).
 "Review of Low-Cost Organic and Inorganic Phase Change Materials with Phase Change Temperature between 0°C and 65°C," 6th International High Performance Buildings Conference, virtual online, May 24-28, 2021.

How can it be built cost-effectively?

- Must accommodate 6 or more modes, instead of 2
- Prefer to use commoditized valves already present in heat pumps
 - 4-way reversing valves
 - EXVs
 - check valves
- Refrigerant charge management during operation can be complex
 - Dead volumes, idle heat exchangers
 - Numerous mode switching scenarios

TES-Ready Heat Pump Prototype Development

A new heat pump (HP) configuration that can **electrify** heating and cooling, provide **demand flexibility**, improve **resilience**, and **improve comfort** during defrost using thermal energy storage (TES)



Diagram of patented TES-ready HP system

Provisional Application 63/446,366 PCT/US24/16070 Accesses 6 modes of operation using a single TES material with near-room temperature phase-change temperature

Mode	Heat Source	Heat Sink
Heating	Air	Building
Heating charging	Air	TES
Heating discharging	TES	Building
Cooling	Building	Air
Cooling charging	TES	Air
Cooling discharging	Building	TES

Residential TES-HP prototype at ORNL



Outdoor unit partially disassembled to prepare for refrigerant line mods

Controls wiring modified to enable additional operating modes





Residential TES-HP prototype at ORNL



Commercial RTU TES-HP prototype at ORNL



Commercial RTU TES-HP prototype at ORNL



Defrost completed in about 3 minutes (compared with typical 10 minutes) while extracting heat from TES instead of building

4-ton RTU with heavily frosted outdoor coil in 35°F chamber

Salt hydrate PCM







Conclusions and next steps

- Conclusions
 - Demand reductions of about 85% in heating mode and 75% in cooling mode are possible, even when running compressor during peak time
 - 2-3 hour load shift using a 4x4x3 ft TES tank for a 3-ton split system
 - 3-4 hour load shift using two 4x4x3 ft TES tanks for a 4-ton RTU
 - In addition, more efficient and comfortable defrost was demonstrated
- Next steps
 - Field testing
 - Finalize development of supervisory controls
 - Residential central-ducted split unit: FRP2 and Yarnell research home
 - Commercial RTU: installation in FY25 in Rancho Cucamonga, CA
 - Expand industry partnerships

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Additional slides

Heat Pump Integration System Configuration

ORNL Developed an approach with HP integrated with TES that can accommodate a large number of operating modes, with low cost, higher flexibility, and ease of installation

Approach	Type of Heat Exchange with PCM	Mechanism of Switching Operating Modes	Challenges	Strengths	
Fully refrigerant- based	DX refrigerant- based	Refrigerant valves	Large refrigerant charge	The best charge and discharge rates	Not feasible with A2L or A3 refrigerants
Fully hydronic	Hydronic- coupled	Hydronic	Charge migration issues for parallel HXs	Uses commercially available components	Limited US market due to lack of hydronic products
Air distribution, hydronic TES coupling	Hydronic- coupled	Refrigerant valves	Many valves required on refrigerant-side	Solves the charge migration issues – extra charge stored in SL accumulation, and EXV balances charge in multiple modes	ORNL's innovative approach leverages low- cost commodifized valves
TES in supply air duct	Air-side coupled		Difficult installation Low flexibility Sensitive to PCM temperature	Conventional HP can be used.	Limited market due to installation challenges

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HX: Heat Exchanger, DX: Direct Expansion

Residential TES-HP prototype at ORNL

- All the six operation modes have been tested under several operating conditions
- TES achieved expected charging and discharging performance (for single speed compressor)
- TES-mediated HP reduces electricity consumption for both heating and cooling compared with conventional ASHP at rating conditions



Cold climate integrated HP example (laboratory)



Outdoor unit connected in the laboratory



Indoor air hander, compressor, suction line accumulator, brazed plate heat exchanger, and 50gallon water tank Using the refrigerant valve switching, the system was experimentally demonstrated to transition modes and establish new charge distribution within



Mode switch within one minute

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Bo Shen, Jeff Munk, Kyle Gluesenkamp "Cold Climate Integrated Heat Pump", 19th International Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Conference at Purdue, July 10 - 14, 2022.

Cold climate integrated HP example (field)





Dedicated water heating COP at the compressor high (3rd) stage in field tests



Outdoor unit installed in 2023 for field test in _{Stor4Bu}Syracuse, NY Indoor unit and 50gallon domestic hot water tank installed in the field site

Energy and demand limits for HP-mediated TES-HP



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TES options

TES temperature is:



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ORNL-developed configuration using standard valves



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Price-responsive Control of AWHP + TES Systems to Access Abundant Power S4B Annual Meeting - Integration Thrust Area

Presenter: Marco Pritoni (LBNL), George Baker (GW)

Contributors: George Baker, Jessica Millar, Peter Grant, Thomas Defauw Stor4Build

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Office of ENERGY EFFICIENCY & RENEWABLE ENERGY





- Show that AWHPs can keep homes in northern Maine warm
- Demonstrate cost savings from thermal storage by accessing cheap renewable generation
- Reduce wind and solar curtailment through Transactive Energy Management



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF

Decarbonizing Space Heating with Heat Pumps may increase Utility Costs

• TES can:

• Allow space

heating and cooling

- Heat pumps currently have higher fuel costs than Natural Gas furnaces/boilers on many
- to access Ratio of the Cost of Operating a Heat Pump vs Natural Gas by State intermittent cheap Natural Gas Cheaper Heat Pump Cheaper electricity. 1.00 Southern California Wholesale Electricity Prices (SP-15) 0.80 May 10 - May 16 2024 0.60 0.40 0.20 May 12 May 13 May 10 M May 14 May 15 Mav 16 Negative for Far Oameowners/Tena Stor4Build

Market Adoption of TES in Residential Buildings Faces Challenges

- Limited adoption of TES in single family residential buildings
 - Typically **utility tariffs** do not incentivize flexible load
 - Lack of industry accepted HP+TES designs and business models
 - Lack of forward-looking controls for HP+TES systems to use electricity when it is cheap and abundant
 - Need automated system to to charge and discharge the TES based on weather and price forecasts

New Charges

3	Versant Delivery	kWh	Price	
0	Distribution	604	\$0.09467	\$57.18
	Transmission	604	\$0.04544	\$27.45
	Stranded Costs	604	\$0.02174	\$13.13
	Conservation	604	\$0.00308	\$1.86
	Versant Delivery Subtotal			\$99.62
Star	ndard Offer Service			
	Supply Service	kWh	Price	
9	Electricity Supply	604	\$0.10763	\$65.01
	Supplier Subtotal			\$65.01



In some grids wholesale and grid-edge (node) prices are very dynamic

Upper Midwest

- Wholesale prices around wind farms go negative as much as 38% of the hours in the winter months
- Millinocket, Maine
 - Wholesale prices are negative ~20% of winter hours
 - Residents pay \$4 per gallon for fuel oil
 - Local utility has an aggressive Time-of-Use distribution tariff
- This is likely to happen in many other places as we electrify heating and transportation
 - Grid-edge needs:
 - Electrified heat should be flexible to reduce the need for distribution upgrades and reduce renewable curtailments







Thermal Storage for Improving the Heat Pump Defrost Process

Jason Woods, Thomas Freeman, Ravi Kishore, Ransisi Huang, Zechao Lu National Renewable Energy Laboratory

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What is defrosting?

- Frost forms on the outdoor coil during heat pump operation.
- Defrosting is the process that removes this frost, typically by reversing the refrigerant cycle (running the heat pump as an air conditioner)



Why do we care about defrost?

- Defrost interrupts the heating process
- Defrost increases electricity use and peak electric power



Field data shows peak power from defrost is ~2.5x higher than typical electric power during heating operation. Field data from Winkler and Ramaraj, 2023.

Winkler, Jon and Sugi Ramaraj. 2023. Field Validation of Air-Source Heat Pumps for Cold Climates. Golden, CO: National Renewable Energy Laboratory. NREL/TP-5500-84745. <u>https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy23osti/84745.pdf</u>

Outline

- Review frost/defrost process
- How can we use TES to mitigate the defrost penalty?
- Modeling
 - Frost/defrost
 - TES
 - Heat pump with TES
- Experimental plan



Field data shows peak power from defrost is ~2.5x higher than typical electric power during heating operation. Field data from Winkler and Ramaraj, 2023.

Frost/defrost process



Heat pump operation

Frost forms on outdoor coil if:

- $T_{evap} < 0$ °C, and
- $T_{dp} > T_{evap}$



Defrost operation

System pulls heat from indoors to melt the frost on the outdoor coil





How can we use TES to mitigate the defrost penalty?



How can we use TES to mitigate the defrost penalty?

Pros:

- Applicable to different HVAC designs
- Retrofittable
- Could fit in roof curb or indoors near ceiling
- Low-cost

Cons:

- Added airside pressure drop
- Air is a poor heat transfer fluid



Modeling: frost and defrost process



Modeling: Thermal energy storage



• 800 kg/m³

Modeling: Thermal energy storage design



Heat Exchanger (HX) design for 10-ton RTU			
Number of channels	130	_	
Air channel thickness	3.0	mm	
PCM thickness	2.3	mm	
HX width	1.0	m	
HX length	0.4	m	
HX height	1.0	m	
Airside pressure drop	70	Ра	

Modeling: Heat pump system



TES reduces total electricity use by 14% compared to baseline with electric resistance heater

TES cuts peak electric power by half compared to baseline with electric resistance heater

Initial cost analysis indicates payback of less than 4 years

Simple payback for defrost application vs. traditional load shifting. Assumed \$0.12/kWh avoided utility costs

	Defrost	Load shifting
Required TES size	5 kWh _{th}	100 kWh _{th}
TES cost per kWh _{th}	\$100/kWh _{th}	\$100/kWh _{th}
TES cost	\$500	\$10,000
Cycles / year	400	150
kWh _e shaved / cycle	2.7	36
kWh _e shaved / yr	1080	5400
\$ saved / yr	\$130/yr	\$650/yr
Simple payback	3.8	15.4



TES prototype





Previous bench-scale prototype



Scaled-up prototype will use commercially available PCM panels from Rubitherm¹

Minimum PCM thickness = 5 mm

¹ https://www.rubitherm.eu/en/productcategory/makroverkaspelung-csmRubitherm

Summary and next steps

- We typically think of TES as a load-shifting technology. But there are other potential value propositions.
- One promising application is using TES to eliminate electric resistance heat during defrost.
- In 2025, we will build a ¼-scale prototype (~1.5 kWh) and measure its performance in the lab.
- We hope to demonstrate this use case in the field in 2026.

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Thank You

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Minimizing integration costs



We are conducting a project in one of those grids in Millinocket, Maine

- Partnering with Efficiency Maine Trust to build out an aggregation of 6 homes located at the most constrained location on the ISO-New England electric grid
- Millinocket, Maine:
 - Former paper mill town, low income, no natural gas infrastructure and high heating costs
 - Heating degree days: 8782
 - \circ 99% heating temp: -5 °F
 - Two of the largest wind farms in New England plus hydro from the now-closed paper mills drive local overgeneration
- 2 homes operated in 2023-24, 4 more being retrofitted this summer
 - Close collaboration with local HVAC contractor, Moscone Heating



The project explores design and control of HP + TES for grid-edge benefits

- How do we **design** a **cost-effective** HVAC system that uses currently **available technologies** to shift the load to low price intervals in a cold climate home ?
- How do we develop a **control system** that operates the HVAC to take advantage of **dynamic prices**?
- What can we learn from a field deployment of such a system?

System Design: Air-to-Water HP + Water Tank TES

- Design specifications
 - Use existing hydronic heat distribution system (baseboard or radiator)
 - Nominal "Required Source Water Temperature" of 180° F
 - No hard constraints on weight/size (basement)
 - Use off the shelf components
 - Modes of operation shall:
 - Heat the house from the heat pump
 - Heat the house from the TES
 - Heat the TES from the heat pump
 - Control system need to:
 - Monitor temp, flow rates, and electrical kW
 - Control the HP and the hydronic distribution
 - Optimize for prices



- Final Design
 - 10 kW LG Hydro-kit 2-stage heat pump
 - 3 water tanks, and buffer tank (each one Vaughn 120 gallons)
 - Flow control manifold (Belimo controllable valves, Caleffi zone controller)
 - Components are all off-the-shelf

Controls Design: Forward-looking optimizer

- Final Design: Two-level control system
 - Local controller monitors system and control HP and distribution manifold
 - **FLO** Optimizer runs in the cloud and sends schedules to the local controller



Status:

- Prototype software developed
- Tested on a model of the system

Charging / discharging storage during off- / on-peak hours



Simulation Results:

• **67% energy cost savings** compared to no load shifting in some scenarios



Field Deployment: Projected Economic Benefits



Estimated customer cost savings with COP = 2

- vs fuel oil: **\$3,000/y**
- vs AWHP on std tariff : **\$3,400**/y
- vs AWHP + TES on TOU tariff: \$2,250/y

Benefit for the grid:

• reduced load during peak demand on the distribution grid

- With FLO algorithms, these systems can respond to grid conditions in real time, and provide lucrative balancing services and support grid-edge
 - Estimated additional +\$1,000/year if access to hourly wholesale prices
- This is critical to addressing the affordability of HP/TES systems

Lessons Learned

- Water Stratification
 - Good stratification is very important to the efficient performance of a air-to-water heat pump
 - Heat pumps work better with lower return water temps and long cycle times
 - Many (direct) storage tanks do not achieve good stratification, especially when in charging mode
- Water Temperatures
 - In first two homes system kept homes warm at all times with 120° F supply water (vs 180° design)
- COP
 - COP was not as high as we would like (~1.8-2.2)
 - but should improve with deployment of FLO
 - COP was measurably higher with cooler supply water temperatures and warmer OAT
 - If we can reduce max supply water temperatures this can improve COP and economics

Conclusion and impact

- AWHPs+ TES can keep homes warm, even in cold climates
- With the right tariff structure, and dynamic prices, AWHPs will be significantly cheaper to run than fossil-fuel heating



- Residential AWHPs can be cost-effective and scalable, but
 - need right tariffs and price access
 - need TES packaged with HP as industrial products
 - need forward-looking controls
- Results will inform how to mitigate key barriers to transforming the grid edge and accelerating onsite emission reductions (DOE Decarbonization blueprint).

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