



# NETWORK VIEW

The Newsletter of the Better Buildings Residential Network

## Welcome to the First Issue

### Stop to Take in the (Network) View

Welcome to the first issue of the [Better Buildings Residential Network](#) newsletter, the *Better Buildings Network View*. The Residential Network connects energy efficiency programs and partners to share best practices and learn from one another to dramatically increase the number of homes that are energy efficient. It also expands on the legacy of the \$500 million [Better Buildings Neighborhood Program](#) that consisted of more than 40 competitively selected state and local governments that developed sustainable energy efficiency upgrade programs.



*Enlarge the map to take a closer look at the states and provinces our members span across the United States and Canada.*

This year kicks off a new era for residential energy efficiency programs. Join the growing national Residential Network community, which gathers online, participates in regular topical calls, identifies opportunities, and addresses challenges faced across the home performance field. Recent highlights include:

- To date, [nearly 60 organizations](#) from across the United States and Canada have become members of the Residential Network. These organizations represent program administrators, contractors, home performance assessors, utilities, financial institutions, nonprofits, regional organizations, as well as state and local governments.
- The newly launched [Better Buildings Residential Network online community](#), hosted by Home Energy Pros, is a unique, digital community by and for those who work in the home energy performance arena.
- Member successes already include the 2013 Andromeda Star of Energy Efficiency award—recognition of [AFC First's](#) loan program by the Alliance to Save Energy.

[Learn more](#) about the Residential Network, including how to join.

January 2014

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### Upcoming Peer Exchange Calls

Existing Residential Network Home Energy Pros group members must sign in to Home Energy Pros to view the following links. Non-members wishing to gain access to these valuable resources are invited to [join](#) the Residential Network member online community on Home Energy Pros.

#### January 9

**Trends in Multifamily Programs: What's Working and What's Challenging**  
3:00–4:30 PM EST  
[Register now](#)

#### January 23

**Optional Residential Program Benchmarking**  
12:30–2:00 PM EST  
[Register now](#)

## New Online Community Launched

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### Join the Conversation on Home Energy Pros

The [Residential Network](#) has launched an [online community](#) hosted by Home Energy Pros, a global social network and community dedicated to home energy professionals.



- Get answers to your questions and help others with their questions posted on discussion threads.
- Take part in and establish discussions.
- Keep up with the calendar of events that includes Residential Network Peer Exchange Calls, links to Peer Exchange Call summaries, and program resources.
- Post and download videos and pictures.
- Create a professional profile.
- Share the great work you are doing through ideas for best practices, case studies, opinion pieces, articles, reviews, presentations, podcasts, and more.

Draw from decades of collective wisdom, practice, and results across disciplines and geography, and more than 3,400 members already on Home Energy Pros. Free registration is required to access the Residential Network group. If you are not a member of Home Energy Pros, you will first need to sign up—it might then take a few business days for your account to be approved.

[Join](#) the Better Buildings Residential Network group on Home Energy Pros.

## Meet the Members

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### Say Hello to 2014—and the 14 Newest Network Members

As the inaugural issue of the *Network View* kicks off 2014, meet the 14 freshest faces to join the Residential Network: [BC Hydro](#); [California Energy Commission](#); [District of Columbia Sustainable Energy Utility](#); [EnergyFit Nevada](#); [Historic Chicago Bungalow Association](#); [Institute for Market Transformation](#); [Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development](#); [Milwaukee Energy Efficiency](#); [Minnick's, Inc.](#); [PUSH Buffalo](#); [Vermont Energy Investment Corporation](#); [Virginia Energy Sense](#); [Walker-Miller Energy Services, LLC](#); and [West Michigan Environmental Action Council](#). View a [full list](#) of members. [Email us](#) to join the Residential Network.

### Opportunities Through the PowerSaver Loan Program

3:00–4:30 PM EST

[Register now](#)

### February 13

#### Energy Efficiency Program Models for Local Government

12:30–2:00 PM EST

[Register now](#)

#### Cost-Effectiveness Tests and Measuring Like a Utility

3:00–4:30 PM EST

[Register now](#)

### Related Events

#### [DOE's "Updated Home Energy Scoring Tool Released" Webinar](#)

Jan. 14, 2014

12:00–1:00 PM EST

#### [Midwest Energy Solutions Conference](#)

Jan. 14–16, 2014

Chicago, IL

#### [SEE Action's "Energy Efficiency Cost-Effectiveness Testing" Webinar](#)

Jan. 16, 2014

2:00–3:30 PM EST

#### [ASHRAE 2014 Winter Conference](#)

Jan. 18–22, 2014

New York, NY

#### [Association of Energy Services Professionals 24th Annual Conference](#)

Jan. 27–30, 2014

San Diego, CA

#### [2014 National Symposium on Market Transformation](#)

Mar. 30–Apr. 1, 2014

Baltimore, MD

#### [ACI 2014 National Home Performance Conference](#)

Apr. 29–May 1, 2014

Detroit, MI

## Better Buildings Examples

The following is one in a series of interviews with partners from the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program that documents successful residential energy efficiency program strategies and lessons learned.

### EI2 Learns That Parties Sell Upgrades

When Better Buildings Neighborhood Program partner [Energy Impact Illinois](#) (EI2) didn't achieve the response expected from a mass media advertising campaign, program administrators regrouped,



engaged their key stakeholders, and then tried a different strategy—one that relied more on a community-based “house party” initiative. Following is an abridged transcript of an interview with Dan Olson, senior energy efficiency planner, and Emily Plagman, senior energy planner for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), which helped create and administer the EI2 program.

#### *Q. What happened at a typical house party?*

Homeowners would invite their family, friends, and neighbors over for a social evening to listen and observe an abbreviated home energy assessment. Typically, the agenda included an introduction to the program; a brief educational talk by an EI2 staffer (e.g., explaining building science concepts such as home energy loss); and an explanation of a basic home energy assessment. The final element involved a Building Performance Institute-certified contractor leading guests through the house and demonstrating blower door and thermal imaging equipment. Attendees could sign up on the spot for a \$99 energy assessment for their own homes, or volunteer to host their own house parties and thereby receive a free energy assessment.

#### *Q. What were the results?*

Over the course of one year, 652 house parties took place with 3,110 people in attendance. We estimate that more than 2,000 attendees signed up for assessments at the house parties, and an additional 540 attendees called our call center to sign up to host a house party—a conversion rate of 82% for house party attendance to assessment sign-up. More than 900 house party participants completed upgrades, making the conversion rate of assessment sign-ups to completed upgrades around 41%. This showed us that helping people see and understand—showing homeowners specific areas of their homes that are losing heat—and giving them a chance to ask questions can really drive up conversion rates. The house parties themselves ultimately proved to be self-sustaining and were the

## Heat Up Your Winter Outreach



DOE's latest [Energy Saver 101 infographic](#) helps you share with your customers everything they need to know about home heating—from how heating systems work and the different types on the market to what to look for when replacing a system and proper maintenance.



“I used to sit on the couch in a hat and fleece pullover. Now, this is the house I want to stay in for a long time.”

— Anne, a homeowner who upgraded her insulation through [Efficiency Maine](#), a Residential Network member. [Watch a video](#) of Anne's story.

largest source of new leads for EI2. Once we introduced this outreach model, we significantly lessened our mass media efforts and focused on complementary earned media opportunities (e.g., radio and TV appearances, news coverage, local cable stations).

[Read the full Focus Series interview](#) to learn how EI2 increased demand for home energy upgrades and assessments through this innovative marketing strategy.

## Stories From the Neighborhood

### Homeowners Go Deeper in the Heart of Texas and Save With Austin Energy

Homeowner Jules Vieau's older house's energy use has been reduced by at least 25% since being upgraded through [Austin Energy](#)'s Advanced Tier program. The initiative has brought homeowners comfort and savings through a multi-stage process that involves energy advocates and emphasizes homeowner engagement. The Advanced Tier program includes everything from insulation and weatherization to duct and HVAC system improvements. [Read how](#) Austin Energy used energy advocates and tiered incentives to help Vieau and another homeowner maximize their savings and comfort.

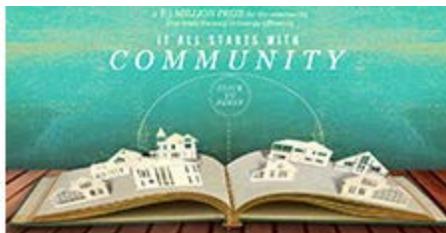


*Vieau's home energy upgrade also addressed air leakage around windows and doors, contributing to his home's reduced energy use.*

## Eye on the Energy Prize

### Last Call for Georgetown University Energy Prize Letters of Intent

Set to launch in February 2014, the [Georgetown University Energy Prize](#) (GUEP) is soliciting [Letters of Intent](#) (LOIs) from eligible U.S. communities. By signing a non-binding LOI, participants can get a jump-start on GUEP and start gaining access to resources and expertise.



Participants in GUEP are competing for a projected \$5 million prize based on their ability to reduce their community's energy use over

two years. LOIs should include a community description containing the following information:

- What you want other cities to know about your community
- A brief overview of the person/entity submitting the LOI, and why they are well-positioned to lead this effort
- A list of municipal officials, community leaders, and organizations that could get involved with this effort
- Any commitments of involvement from leaders, organizations, and/or utilities you have received to date (optional)

[Learn more](#) about GUEP and submitting an LOI on behalf of your community.

## Tools to Create Better Buildings

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### Home Energy Score Released Updated Scoring Tool—Join a Webinar to Learn More

DOE's Home Energy Score program released its first major update to the Home Energy Scoring Tool in December 2013. After more than a year of implementation and feedback from Partners, DOE made significant improvements to the Scoring Tool's calculation methodology, user interface, and its ability to motivate homeowner investment in energy improvements.



Join a [webinar](#) on Tuesday, January 14, 2014, at 12:00 p.m. Eastern to learn about the updates and to find out how utilities, state and local governments, and others can use the Scoring Tool to support residential energy efficiency goals.

Organizations can join more than 25 Partners and 175 Qualified Assessors nationwide that offer the Home Energy Score. More than 8,000 homes have been scored since 2012, and DOE expects that number to increase significantly with the release of the updated Scoring Tool. [Register](#) for the webinar today.

## Resource Corner

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Settling back in after the holidays? Get up to speed on what you might have missed by checking out these reads:

- “[10 New Year’s Resolutions to Keep the Customers Coming](#)” draws on inspiration from Better Buildings Neighborhood Program partner E12’s customer service tips for contractors involved in its highly successful house party program (*Home Energy* magazine’s blog, December 2013).
- [Energy Pro3: Productivity, Progress, and Prosperity for the Southeast](#) describes how 16 cities making up the Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance (SEEA), a DOE Better Buildings Neighborhood Program partner, served as “test labs” to identify key elements for deploying successful, sustainable on-the-ground energy efficiency programs in southeastern markets (SEEA, December 2013).
- [Getting the Biggest Bang for the Buck: Exploring the Rationales and Design Options for Energy Efficiency Financing Programs](#) provides an overview of the fundamentals of energy efficiency financing program planning and design (Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, December 2013).
- [Making the Business Case for Energy Efficiency: Case Studies of Supportive Utility Regulation](#) examines six utilities that provide relatively large-scale customer energy efficiency programs in states with decoupled and/or shareholder incentives in place (American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, December 2013).

## Share The View

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Forward this email to your colleagues or encourage them to sign up to receive each issue. Send email addresses to [Better Buildings Residential Network Support](#).

Do you have something you would like to share with other members through the *Better Buildings Network View*? Send an email to [Better Buildings Residential Network Support](#) to submit your idea.

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