DOE Residential Energy Efficiency Solutions
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“Small Towns: Unique Markets and Messages”

Chuck Wilson, STEP-UP Program Director
What is STEP-UP?

A 3-year grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to the Town of University Park, Maryland (August, 2010 through July, 2013)

“To create a model community energy transformation program that serves as a roadmap for other small towns across the U.S.”
University Park (UP)

- 2,500 residents, 925 homes, two churches, one school, town hall.

- Typical small town:
  - volunteer Council
  - small municipal staff
  - modest budget
  - limited energy expertise
Why Small Towns?

• 80% of the US lives in 350 metro areas, within which half live in jurisdictions of 25,000 or less.

• The average jurisdiction in the US is only 6,200.

• In Maryland:
  – Only 17 cities with populations >15,000
  – 131 towns and villages, average population 2,174
Social Marketing

• Low cost social marketing using trusted, established neighborhood channels is \textit{the} comparative advantage of the small town model:
  • Newsletter
  • Town events
  • Direct mailing
  • STEP house parties
  • Yard signs
  • neighbors

• Marketing as a percentage of budget for a typical efficiency program is $>30\%$. For STEP it is 3\%.
Leveraged Infrastructure

- UP residents
- Civic Association, clubs, churches
- School and PTA
- UP listserve
- UP newsletter
- UP events
Shared Financing

**Rebates**
Maryland Energy Administration
DHCD
Pepco
STEP-UP rebates

**Financing**
Sandy Spring Bank
Maryland Clean Energy Center
DHCD
Shared Transaction Support

The STEP Energy Coach

• Individual facilitation is key to the program

• towns or counties could work together to support a “regional” Coach
Proven Impact to Date (18 Months)

• **25%** of UP households have signed up for the program (226);

• **19%** of UP households have had a home evaluation (171);

• **12%** of UP homes have completed efficiency upgrades (108).
Small Town but Scalable

Shared: Financing & Energy Coach

Town A: Social Marketing & Leveraged Infrastructure

Town B: Social Marketing & Leveraged Infrastructure

Town C: Social Marketing & Leveraged Infrastructure

Town D Social Marketing & Leveraged Infrastructure

Town E: Social Marketing & Leveraged Infrastructure
Next “STEPs”

1. Develop “tool kit” learning materials with a small town focus.

2. Frame the “who, what, why and what will it look like” of the tool kit.

3. How can we all stay engaged, and dovetail the tool kit with the larger learning material efforts underway through the DOE.