Chula Vista: A case study in the role of municipal government in promoting energy efficiency

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Introduction:
The unique role of city government in promoting energy efficiency has been recognized by the California Public Utilities Commission through the development of “Local Government Partnerships.” Working with San Diego Gas & Electric, the City of Chula Vista’s 2005-2008 partnership developed a multifaceted approach to building efficiency, with different programs tailored to the needs of various city sectors.

Sector: Area Businesses and Organizations
In area businesses, the partnership planned to meet energy savings by:
- Installing energy efficient pre-rise spray valves in the place of old valves
- Replacing all incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs
- Conducting energy assessments and referring businesses to SDG&E rebate programs

Outreach Tools:
- Advertising and direct mail campaigns usually yielded few responses
- Door-to-Door Canvassing was more successful
- Approximately 1300 businesses visited so far
- Approximately a third participating in spray valve or CFL exchange program

Results:
- Exchanged 4,000 light bulbs and conducted approximately 60 home energy assessments.

Figure 4: A partnership intern inspects a spray valve.

Figure 5: Number of participating businesses by sector. The high number of participating restaurants reflect the partnership’s early emphasis on food service.

Figure 6: Results of residential energy assessments showing areas with most potential for residential retrofit.

Lessons Learned:
The SDG&E/City of Chula Vista Partnership has been beneficial for both organizations. It provides the City with resources to help it better serve constituents, and helps SDG&E promote its efficiency programs through education and outreach mechanisms different than those available to the Utility. In the design of future programs, SDG&E and the City will focus on integrating energy-efficient practice into existing City functions. The Partnership is currently developing programs that:
- Provide LEED certification to City Code Enforcement Officers and Planners so they can bring this expertise to their plan reviews and can help develop codes to promote energy efficiency
- Make sure projects built with City funds, or with extensive City Oversight (Condo Conversions) are built to be energy efficient

Sponsorship: The City of Chula Vista and SDG&E energy-efficiency partnership program is funded by California utility ratepayers and administered by SDG&E under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.

Table 4 – Summary of Waterland Development Savings: Title 24 vs. Builder’s Proposed Design vs. EE Package with and without PV

Figure 2: Energy analysis of three different project design scenarios.