



**Better Buildings Residential Network Peer  
Exchange Call Series:  
Ghosts in the Attic – Horror Stories from the Field  
What to Do When Things Go Wrong (201)**

October 29, 2015

*Call Slides and Discussion Summary*

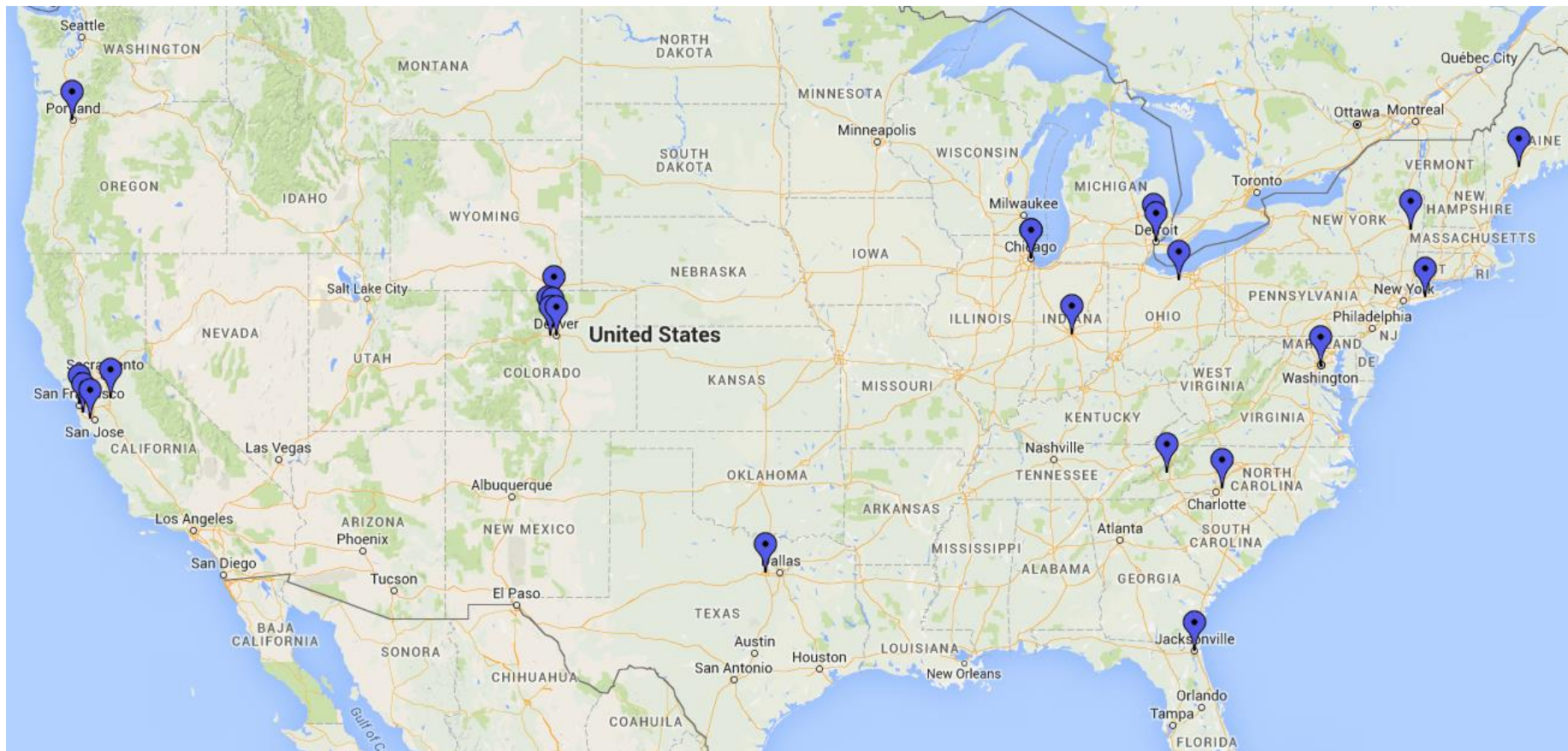
# Call Participants: Residential Network Members

- City and County of Denver, Colorado
- City of Sunnyvale, California
- Elevate Energy
- Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
- New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
- The Oberlin Project
- Pure Eco Environmental Solutions

# Call Participants: Non-Network Members

- AE Building Systems
- Ancillary Analytics
- Apple Blossom Energy, Inc.
- The Brendle Group
- CLEAResult
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Fox Energy Specialists
- Gary Gray & Associates
- Jacksonville Electric Authority
- MPower Oregon
- Opportunity Council
- Pacific Gas & Electric Company
- Salcido Solutions
- TRC Solutions

# Call Participant Locations



# Agenda

- Agenda Review and Ground Rules
- Opening Poll and Introductions
- Brief Residential Network Overview
- Featured Speakers
  - **Robert Wallace**, Energy Advisor, CLEARResult
  - **Kimberly Loewen**, Manager of Construction Services, Elevate Energy (*Network Member*)
- Discussion
  - Has your program ever been spooked by anything unexpected on a project?
  - What do you do when things go wrong? Scream for help?
  - What can you do to prepare staff working in the field for things that go bump in the night?
  - What can programs do to prevent monsters under the bed?
  - Any additional stories, questions, or tips for getting rid of skeletons in the energy efficiency closet?
- Closing Poll(s) and Upcoming Call Schedule



# Opening Poll

How would you describe your energy efficiency horror stories – the scariest things that have happened to you or your colleagues?

- I've never had a Nightmare on Energy Efficiency Street, but I'm thrilled to hear about others' ghosts in the attic. – **56%**
- Get me out of here, I only like this holiday for the candy! – **33%**
- I have the Ghostbusters on speed dial, so I've never been scared. – **11%**
- Scarier than Psycho! I have a bone-chilling tale to share. – **0%**

# Better Buildings Residential Network

**Better Buildings Residential Network:** Connects energy efficiency programs and partners to share best practices and learn from one another to increase the number of homes that are energy efficient.

**Membership:** Open to organizations committed to accelerating the pace of home energy upgrades.

## **Benefits:**

- Peer Exchange Calls 4x/month
- Tools, templates, & resources
- Recognition in media, materials
- Speaking opportunities
- Updates on latest trends
- Voluntary member initiatives
- Residential Program Solution Center guided tours

**Commitment:** Provide DOE with annual number of residential upgrades, and information about associated benefits.

*For more information or to join, email [bbresidentialnetwork@ee.doe.gov](mailto:bbresidentialnetwork@ee.doe.gov)*

# Program Experience: CLEAResult

Robert Wallace, Energy Advisor





# Horror Stories: Critters



# Horror Stories: People



# Lessons Learned

- Commiserate with others who have been there
- Use examples involving others to put people at ease, make the situation feel normal, diffuse tension
- Remember that you may be the messenger with bad news, so if it isn't received well, you aren't at fault
- Put your own safety and the homeowner's safety first; all you can do is provide information and then let them make their own decisions

# Lessons Learned: Elevate Energy

Kimberly Loewen, Manager of Construction Services



# Better Buildings Residential Network Peer Exchange

What to Do When Things Go Wrong  
October 29, 2015



**ELEVATE** ENERGY  
Smarter energy use for all



# What to Do Before Things Go Wrong

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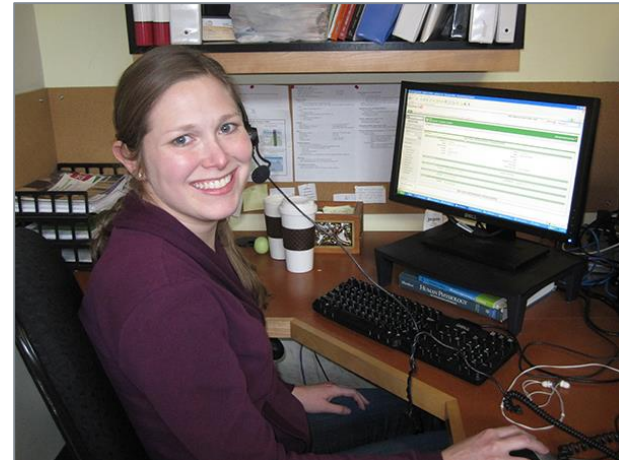
- Prepare and train
- Understand the bottom line goal(s)
- Know program requirements and boundaries
- Implement a system for documenting and tracking 'problems'
- Strong communication plan is key
- Be able to adjust and adapt as needed





# What to Do When Things Go Wrong

## Liaison and advocate for homeowners





# What to Do When Things Go Wrong

## Liaison and support for contractors







# Questions?

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Kimberly Loewen  
Manager of Construction Services  
Elevate Energy  
773.269.3169

# Residential Program Solution Center Resources

- Access the Program Design component and learn how to [make design decisions](#) that will prepare your program to cope well in all circumstances, including the unexpected.
- Contractors are often on the front lines when scary situations arise. Learn how you can [support your contractors](#) through strong relationships and open communication.



<https://bbnp.pnnl.gov/>

While you are there, see the latest Proven Practices post on [Tiered Financing](#).

*The Solution Center is continually updated to support residential energy efficiency programs—[member ideas are wanted!](#)*

# Discussion Questions

- Has your program ever been spooked by anything unexpected on a project?
- What do you do when things go wrong? Scream for help?
- What can you do to prepare staff working in the field for things that go bump in the night?
- What can programs do to prevent monsters under the bed?
- Any additional stories, questions, or tips for getting rid of skeletons in the energy efficiency closet?

# Presentation and Discussion Highlights

- Horror stories often involve unsatisfied customers.
- Keep customers happy when things go wrong. Offer sympathy and let them vent, while focusing on the project. Check in periodically to let them know the program is aware and involved.
- Give energy advisors formal training/roleplaying to prepare them for the unexpected.
- Create trusted relationships with homeowners and contractors to ensure they will call you first when they need help.
- Log issues internally and be sure to follow up.
- When needed, mediate disputes between contractors and customers and offer support moving forward. Walk homeowners through any information that they need.

# Closing Poll

- After today's call, what will you do?
  - Seek out additional information on one or more of the ideas – **78%**
  - Make no changes to your current approach – **22%**
  - Consider implementing one or more of the ideas discussed – **0%**
  - Other (please explain) - **0%**



# Peer Exchange Call Series

***Beginning in October, we will hold one Peer Exchange call every Thursday from 1:00-2:30 pm ET.***

***This is a change from the past call schedule.***

Calls cover a range of topics, including financing & revenue, data & evaluation, business partners, multifamily housing, and marketing & outreach for all stages of program development and implementation

## Upcoming calls:

- **November 19:** The Energy-Water Nexus and What It Can Do for Your Residential Program (301)
- *No call November 26 – Thanksgiving*
- **December 3:** Shark Tank: Residential Energy Efficiency Edition – Episode 2 (301)
- **December 10:** Capitalizing on Multifamily Benefits for Multifamily Housing (201)
- *No calls December 11-31 – Winter Break, see you in 2016!*

# Upcoming Webinars

## **SEE Action Webinar: Benchmarking Behavioral Programs on Savings and Impacts**

- Tuesday, November 3: 2:00 PM EST
- **Register:**  
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5479049329242892546>

## **EPA State and Local Climate and Energy Webcast: Better Together: Linking and Leveraging Energy Programs for Low-Income Households**

- Thursday, November 19: 2:00-3:30 PM EST
- **Registration:**  
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7475586524357611778>

## **SEE Action Webinar: Behavior Change Strategies in Standard Programs**

- Wednesday, December 2: 2:00 PM EST
- **Register:**  
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5257327311943758594>

# Thank you!

Please send any follow-up questions or future call topic ideas to:  
[peerexchange@rossstrategic.com](mailto:peerexchange@rossstrategic.com)

