



SMART ENERGY DESIGN ASSISTANCE CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ILLINOIS PROGRAM ASSISTS BUSINESSES SEEKING RELIEF FROM RISING ENERGY COSTS

Small Business Smart Energy Program Helps Identify & Implement Efficiency Measures

Champaign, IL - Illinois lawmakers are working feverishly to extend the freeze on impending electrical rate increases throughout the state. Meanwhile, utilities, such as Commonwealth Edison and Ameren, seek only to defer the cost increases over a few years, eventually collecting the entire cost of the increase, plus financing charges. No matter the end result, Illinois businesses keeping an eye on their profit margins can take a proactive stance to avoid unnecessary expenditures. Energy efficiency is the answer, and an Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity sponsored program can provide guidance towards individualized solutions.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) School of Architecture and the Geothermal Heat Pump Consortium (GHPC) have joined forces to help small businesses reduce their operational costs through the Small Business Smart Energy Program (SB\$E), a state initiative set to help businesses become more energy efficient. Through this program, the Smart Energy Design Assistance Center (SEDAC) has been established on the UIUC campus. This innovative Center is now offering no-cost energy audits, economic feasibility analyses and whole-building design assistance to new and existing Illinois businesses that want to lower their energy costs, making them more profitable and competitive in the marketplace. These services include assistance with LEED, ENERGY STAR, and Energy Policy Act 2005 tax incentive certifications. Technical assistance is provided for free, while business owners work with contractors for implementation of the recommended measures.

In addition to providing assistance to area businesses, SEDAC offers face-to-face and online training aimed at professional development, most of which offer continuing education units. Some training is project-oriented and is designed to help individuals gain requisite knowledge in energy efficient design and new regulations and codes, while others are for the more advanced professional looking to catch up on new industry developments. One course "Energy Basics for Small Business" is targeted specifically to the small business owner who wants to improve his understanding of energy efficiency.

The Small Business Smart Energy Program

The Smart Energy Design Assistance Center is currently working to provide engineering design assistance to building project stakeholders in order to identify opportunities for energy savings. The primary goals of the SB\$E program are to reduce the cost of doing business in the state

through improved energy efficiency, to support job creation, mitigate pollution, and to improve small business competitiveness.

According to Donald Fournier, research specialist in sustainable planning and design at UIUC's Building Research Council and SEDAC project manager, technical services offered by the center are designed to identify opportunities for energy savings through intelligent building design and efficient building components and systems.

"Program staff will work with the facility owners and their architects and/or engineers to incorporate the recommended energy-efficient technologies," Fournier said. "Energy efficient design assistance includes feasibility studies, lifecycle cost analyses and design suggestions that will familiarize project engineers, architects and other stakeholders with innovative, cost-effective, efficient design approaches."

To be eligible for services, the business must be for-profit, be located in Illinois, and be willing to implement energy efficiency measures at its own expense. If those qualifications are met, a business can fill out an application, which is available on the SEDAC web site (www.SEDAC.org), to begin receiving design assistance services.

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More information about the Small Business Smart Energy Program is available from the Smart Energy Design Assistance Center (SEDAC), a branch of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's School of Architecture that promotes the use of energy conservation measures and sustainable building practices. SEDAC is a resource for anyone wishing to know more about energy efficiency in Illinois and can provide technical expertise to all Illinois for-profit businesses. SEDAC can be reached toll-free at 1-800-214-7954 or can be visited on the Internet at www.sedac.org.