US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Changing the Market for Energy Efficiency in Whatcom County, Washington

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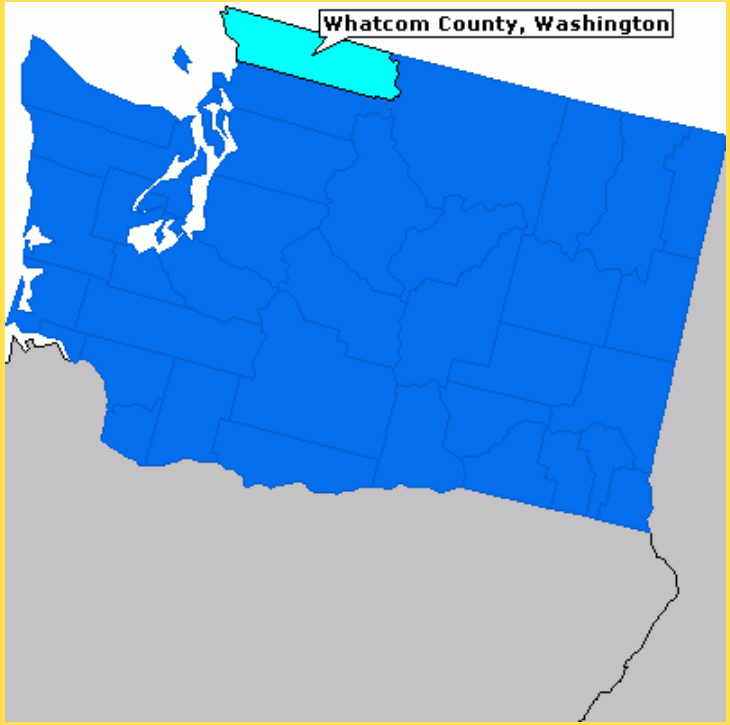
Community Energy Challenge

Program Background
- goals
- partners
- process

Outcomes
- energy efficiency
- economic impact

Evaluation
- Lessons Learned

Q&A



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Community Energy Challenge

Making energy efficiency, accessible, affordable, and attractive by creating a One Stop Shop for Energy Efficiency in Whatcom County, Washington

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Program Goals

- Create and support local living wages jobs in the construction industry
- Reduce energy consumption in residential and commercial buildings in Whatcom County

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Community Action Plan

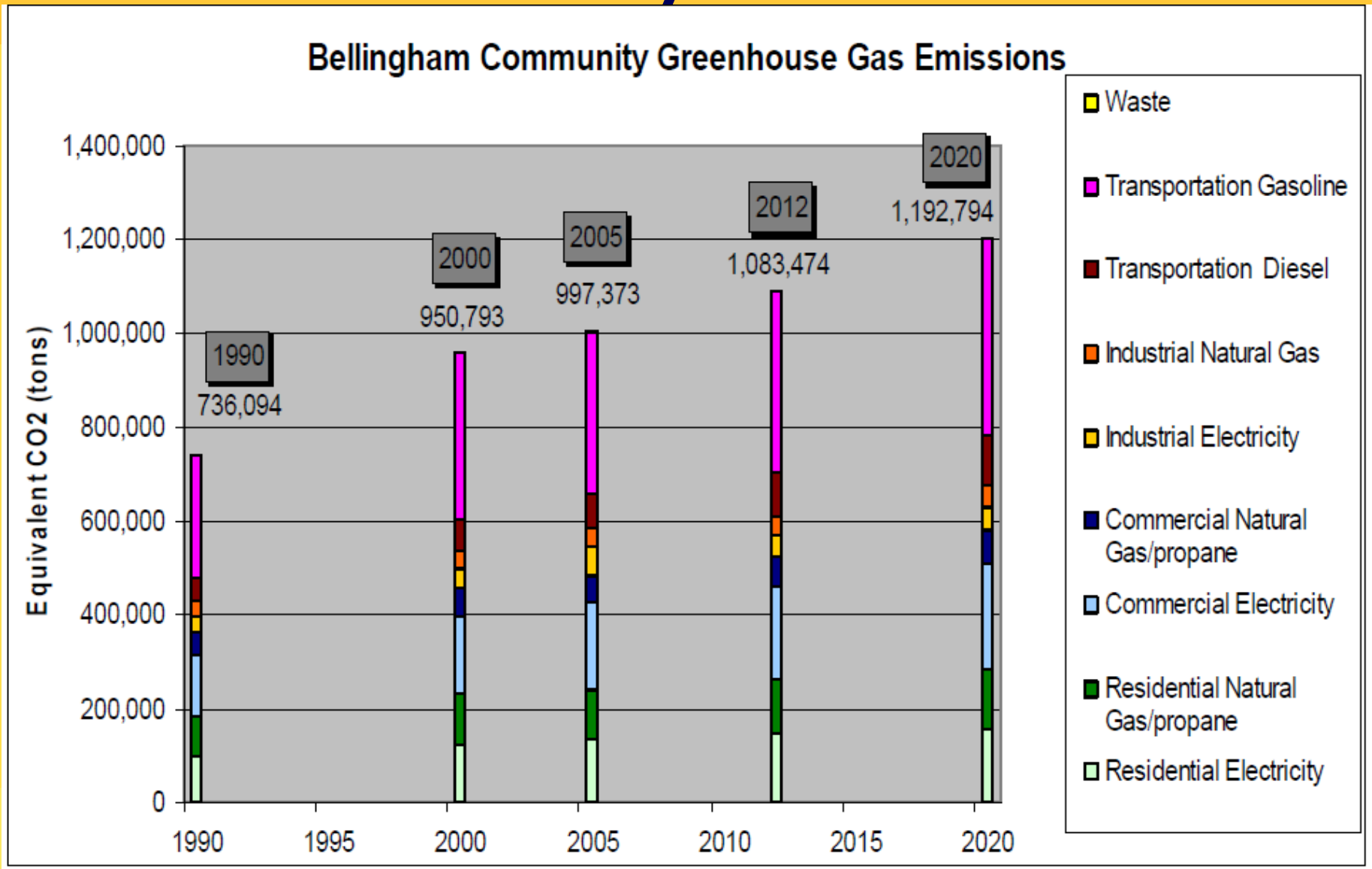

Figure 26: Community greenhouse gas emissions 1990-2020

Source CACP Model Output

Partners

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- non-profit community action agency
- 25 years weatherization experience

Residential Program

Contractor Training

Start to Finish Project Coordination

Fiscal Coordination

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- non-profit network of local independently-owned businesses
- led successful 2007 Green Power Challenge

Commercial Program

Marketing & Outreach

Partnerships & Community Engagement

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Partnerships

Utility Companies

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Local Governments

City of Bellingham Washington

Whatcom County Washington

City of Ferndale Washington

Non-profits & Educational Institutions

Bellingham Technical College

ReSources For Sustainable Communities

Washington State University Extension Energy Program

Western Washington University

Bellingham Whatcom County Housing Authorities

PeaceHealth Whatcom Region
Dedicated to Exceptional Medicine and Compassionate Care

Financial Institutions

eefc Financing for a sustainable economy

Banner Bank

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Overview the CEC process

So Far…

As of March 2012

- Residential assessments: 655
- Residential projects: 455 (in 346 homes)
  - Average $450/year savings (~30%)
- Commercial assessments: 120
- Commercial projects: 48 (at 32 businesses)

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Economic Impact

As of March 2012

- Last quarter: 84 positions supported (28 FTEs)
- Total economic activity: $6,048,075
- Dollars of private investment per public dollar: $1.17
- Estimated annual energy savings: $229,117
- 122 projects used loans

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Program Continuity

Beyond the Recovery Act:

- Funded through mid-2013
- Possibility for continued support from Washington State to continue to provide funds to CEEP projects
- Income generated through customer fees and project coordination/customer acquisition fees from contractors
- Program will be scaled according to operational funds/fees structure adjusted as needed

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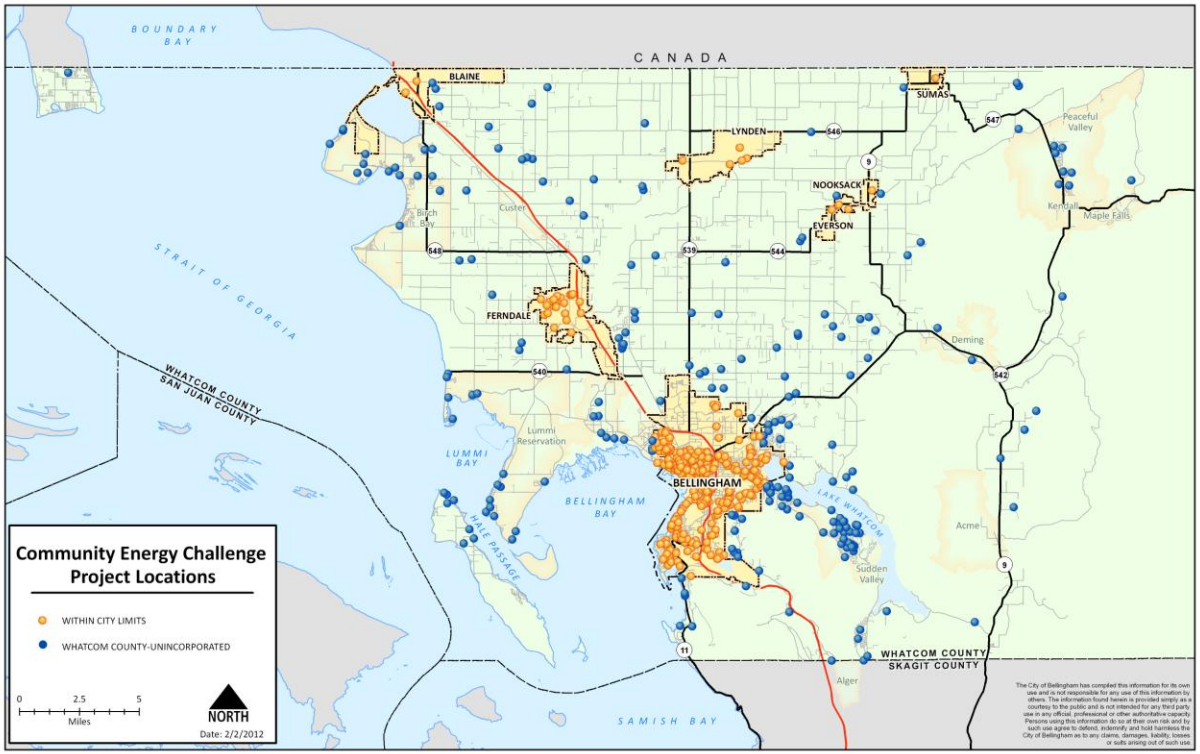
Lessons Learned

- There is ample market demand for this type of EE work, and significant savings opportunity



Lessons Learned

- **Importance of identifying non-profits to partner with:**
  - This can have a direct influence on funding a program
    - Provide program administration role
      - Great if local government does not have the staff or capability
    - Provide expertise
    - Provide Grant writing expertise

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Lessons Learned

- The critical role funding plays in developing a program
  - Planning improves the chance of obtaining funding for a program
  - Know how much funding you need for your program
  - Begin to identify quality funding sources
  - Flexibility to apply for grants when they become available
    - ARRA Better Buildings grant as an example

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Lessons Learned

- **Importance of reaching out to utilities**
  - Understand what utilities gain from energy efficiency
  - Recognize their constraints – improvements must meet specific cost effectiveness criteria

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Lessons Learned

- Recommendations for communities on a shoestring budget
  - **Pilot program can be a low-cost path to success**
    - Can expand the program
    - Success can show proof of concept and lead to greater funding
  - **Focus first on the information barrier**

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Questions

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