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ENERGY EXTENSION SERVICE

(By Judith M. Liersch,¹ Director, Energy Extension Service, DOE)

The Energy Extension Service (EES) is presently operating as a pilot program in 10 States. As a pilot program, it provides a promising experiment in energy outreach which can be used to develop a rational and effective nationwide program.

BACKGROUND

The enabling legislation for the Energy Extension Service is title V of the Energy Research and Development Administration's (ERDA) fiscal year 1978 authorization bill (P.L. 95-39) which was signed into law June 3, 1977. A review of the legislation indicates the following points of congressional concern and intent:

- The bill's sponsors were concerned that creating general awareness of the energy problem would not be enough. Individuals need the knowledge and capability to use conservation and alternative energy technologies on a specified basis, as well as to understand the energy problem.
- Current Federal energy outreach efforts were viewed as piecemeal approaches without coordination and overall planning.
- The underlying philosophy is to create an outreach approach, heavily dependent on State participation, as an effective way to ensure individual capability to adopt suitable energy saving techniques and technologies.

The concept of direct assistance to consumers inherent in EES stems from the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) model where CES acts as a major force and catalyst for widespread change at the local level. The record shows many references to the congressional intent that the EES follow the CES model to provide grass-roots delivery of relevant information and assistance and the follow through to be sure this is timely, on target and thoroughly understood.

A major departure from the CES model is that there is no single equivalent to the land grant college system in energy to administer and provide technical support to EES. Rather, in EES the State government administers the program and the technical base is understood to exist in different institutions in each State, including the land grant institutions. ERDA was selected to implement the EES since ERDA was close to this technical base which is critical to the program success. With the reorganization of the energy agencies, the Department of Energy is assuming the role of managing the EES.

¹ The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the USDA.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The major purpose and the bottom line of the EES is to increase energy savings and the substitution of renewable for nonrenewable fuels. This is to be accomplished by providing small energy consumers with an accessible, reliable and creditable source of assistance.

Small consumers specifically targeted by EES include individuals, small institutions and business establishments and local governments. History has shown that these are the least well prepared energy users for coping with current energy problems. EES aims particularly to teach small users to be better able to cope with rising energy prices and potential fuel shortages.

Finally, it is assumed that EES target audiences, in the course of receiving extension services, will report on the institutional and other barriers perceived to be preventing adoption of the energy saving measures being promoted. EES cannot necessarily overcome these barriers, but can initiate a systematic process for collecting such information and transmitting it for follow-up action to public and private organizations at Federal and State levels. Thus, an opportunity is created for regulators, legislators, administrators, and technology developers to take action to overcome some of the barriers impeding use of energy saving methods and equipment.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

One of the major program highlights is face-to-face assistance to small energy consumers. In addition to this emphasis on personalized assistance, another special aspect of EES is the State role in planning and operating the program. We are committed to the philosophy that States must have the flexibility to design program measures which are suited to their particular energy circumstances.

In the area of technical assistance, DOE/EES operates as a "wholesaler" and one which must be very responsive in efficiently supplying the States with technical information and training assistance they specifically require. The DOE/EES technical assistance team is working with the pilot States to identify their specific needs and to provide service characterized by quick turnaround on technical questions. Further action involves finding public and private information resources for the States, then facilitating contact. The overriding aim is to build technical capability within the States and an ability to benefit from the resources already available.

A recurring theme throughout the development of the program is not to "reinvent the wheel." DOE/EES encourages the States to design their programs to tie directly into and supplement existing programs and service mechanisms wherever possible thus enabling States to achieve a multiplier effect by tapping into the best services available throughout the State.

To maximize the benefit of lessons learned, we have given the nonpilot States a head start in developing an energy outreach program. Each nonpilot State has access to a small grant to be used to track the pilot program. In addition, the pilot States have each budgeted a half-man year of effort for information sharing with the nonpilot States. DOE/EES also makes available to these States activities

such as a recently held technical information short course held at the DOE Technical Information Center in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

PILOT TEST FEATURES

There are a number of special approaches with which DOE/EES is experimenting in the pilot program and which may have broader application.

- DOE/EES is pursuing a simple and economic evaluation to determine the overall implementation approach, and specifically, what works best, what doesn't and why. The basic elements to the evaluation are a rigorous evaluation design coupled with systematic data collection and monthly interviews with State personnel associated with the EES programs. In the 18 months of operation of the pilot program, it is probably not possible to achieve definitive answers but trends will emerge to guide any future efforts.
- The pilot program is set up to test the interaction between DOE/EES program management in the field and in Washington headquarters and to work out a viable communications system between field and headquarters. One of the three State program officers working with DOE/EES is located in Denver and works with three Western/Southwestern States. Clearly a national program will call for a significant role for DOE/EES personnel located in offices in the field.
- In order to facilitate and encourage information sharing among the pilot States, and between the States and DOE/EES, an informal Pilot State Council is being set up. One of the major roles of the Council will be to recommend to DOE the activities to be funded by a special projects fund. This is a \$700,000 reserve designed to enable the States to undertake projects to meet needs which were not anticipated at the time the proposals were submitted in July, projects which benefit two or more States, or generally, more innovative high risk projects which may be experimental in design.
- The pilot program will give DOE an opportunity to test the concepts and approach to collecting barrier information and feeding this back to decisionmakers in a position to take action on the barriers preventing adoption of energy techniques and technologies.

PILOT PROGRAM UPDATE

The 10 pilot States were selected competitively in August 1977 from among 50 proposals received by ERDA/DOE for the Energy Extension Service. The proposals were selected on technical merit and to represent a mix of program and management approaches as well as a broad geographic representation. Grants were awarded in September to each State for \$1.1 million for the 19-month pilot period.

The 10 pilot States are: Alabama, Connecticut, Michigan, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

The States are currently preparing detailed implementation plans to assure that resources are appropriately allocated to accomplish the activities in the State proposals. When the plans are completed at the

end of November they will provide a detailed basis for tracking the programs and for constructing effective evaluation models for each State. Some services will be offered in the pilot States by the end of the year.

Several services are common to all the pilot States: energy audits, seminars, workshops and training, information dissemination to residential dwellers, and energy hotlines. These services are targeted for residential consumers, small commercial establishments and public institutions. Such commonality of services and target audiences should assist DOE/EES in drawing practical lessons which can assist energy extension services in different regions at such time as the program is expanded.

Each pilot State, however proposes to expand on or initiate some service that is different from the others or approaches the service in some unique way. For instance:

- Alabama* will offer car care clinics
- Connecticut* plans consumer education on peak load pricing
- Michigan's* ESS will include vocational education in energy conservation
- Texas* is preparing seminars for savings and loans officers to assist them in assessing energy conservation loan requests
- Wyoming* will offer home energy audits using para-professionals

The implementation approaches by the pilot States are quite varied. In terms of management, five States will focus EES management on the State government; three will use universities; and two have hybrid organizations combining both university and State government elements. Some States, like Wyoming, plan to deliver services statewide. Others, like Washington, are targeting narrowly defined geographic areas. All the States in one way or another use delivery support from sources other than the managing unit. For instance, seven States will provide services with assistance from the Cooperative Extension Service. In Pennsylvania, the EES will be aided by the well-established Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program (PENNTAP).

An interagency working group has been established to serve as a focus for providing DOE with comments on EES implementation and other information that might be of use to the pilot States. It is expected that the working group will become a vehicle for coordinating Federal efforts to provide technical assistance to small energy consumers. Relations are being established with national associations and we are just beginning to coordinate our activities with the new program offices in DOE.

DOE issued the announcement of grants to the nonpilot States on October 14 and responses are due in by December 9. All of the States and many of the territories have indicated that they intend to reply. Clearly, there is tremendous interest in this type of energy program in the States.

Finally, we have two other activities underway which were required by the enabling legislation: the Comprehensive Plan and Program and the National Advisory Board.

In response to congressional concern that the Federal Government coordinate its activities for developing energy information, education and outreach, EES and related Federal energy agencies are preparing

a comprehensive program and plan for beginning the process of planning an integrated effort. The first report will describe the status and objectives of existing programs and some of the lessons learned by the various programs, some of which may have broader application. We hope that the report will stimulate further action for coordination among the programs when it is submitted to the President and Congress in December.

DOE, which accounts for 45 percent of the energy outreach activities undertaken by the Federal Government, is already in the process of consolidating its programs in response to the general philosophy inherent in the formation of DOE. In addition, the National Governors' Association is undertaking an initiative to effect consolidation of the planning for energy programs sponsored under Federal grants. DOE has played an active role in legislative preparation and we anticipate introduction of the initiative in fiscal year 1978.

A National Advisory Board required by the enabling legislation is still in the design stage. Early next year we will have a proposal on structure and functions of the Board ready for consideration. We expect that the Board, which will represent the concerns of the EES target audiences will provide a useful arena for consideration of major EES policy decisions.

This is a general overview of the development of the pilot EES and the possibilities for effective cooperation on all sides. Building on the example of the Cooperative Extension Service and working with USDA and others, we will help small energy consumers to cope with the potential dangers of our energy future, and we will assist the Nation in meeting the ambitious, but essential goals set forth in the President's Energy Plan.