

The Salt Lake Tribune

‘Bonanza’ » Southwest U.S. could save \$20B total.

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First Published Oct 11 2012 05:16 pm • Last Updated Oct 11 2012 06:02 pm
Report says Utahns could save \$1.7B through energy efficiency

Utahns could save roughly \$1.7 billion by plugging the energy leaks in their homes, recycling old refrigerators, switching to low-energy lighting and other efficiency moves, according to a new study.

The report, dubbed "[The \\$20 Billion Bonanza](#)," details best practices that utilities and their customers throughout the region can use to save money and lower pollution. Authored by the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEET), the study estimates improvements could mean 3,100 new jobs and 20 percent less energy consumed by 2020.

Lead author Howard Geller, executive director of SWEET, said saving energy is the lowest cost, cleanest and least risky option for utilities and their customers — even with all the programs already implemented by Rocky Mountain Power, which serves 825,000 customers in Utah.

"We want to show it's still possible to take these programs to the next level," he said. "There's more energy savings we can get. We can save homes and businesses money, reduce pollution emissions and support additional jobs in the state."

Geller detailed SWEET's findings in a briefing Thursday in the State Capitol. One of those on hand was Sarah Wright, executive director of the advocacy group, Utah Clean Energy, which helped organize the program. She said energy efficiency is key to meeting demands and keeping Utah's energy rates low.

"This report illustrates Utah's immense potential to not only save energy," she said, "but [it] also demonstrates the tremendous opportunity we have in Utah to help families and businesses save money on their energy bills."

The report zeroes in on the partnership between utility companies and their customers to make electric service as efficient as possible. A full suite of programs would require partners to invest \$2.2 billion — and together reap benefits worth around \$3.9 billion.

Carol Hunter, who oversees energy-efficiency programs for Rocky Mountain Power, said her staff will be digging into the report to see what new ideas they can find for improvements to their programs.

Already, she noted, Rocky Mountain Power spends about \$45 million a year on efficiency and programs that manage power during those times when customer demand is most brisk. The

programs annually save about 258,000 megawatts of electricity, about what would be generated by 53 wind turbines.

"It's a significant amount of energy," she said.

One program Hunter's company might try, Geller suggested, is incentives for homeowners to update their electronics to newer, more energy-efficient models. Hunter responded that Rocky Mountain Power has looked at that and hasn't determined how to make it work best.

As for state utility regulators, one improvement might be setting energy-saving targets for the future.

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