

Dealing With Customer Interest In On-Site Renewable Power

Developed by the Rural Electricity Resource Council



Date (Sponsoring utility selects the date)

• 8:30 AM. (sponsor can select starting time) – Introductions & Course begins

I. Ready or Not, Customers Want to Generate Their Own Electricity

- Why utilities are getting questions about residential-size wind & solar
- Determining the interest (leasing wind rights vs. purchasing; PV vs. solar thermal)
- The power supplier's role -- offer facts, but it's their money; protect the grid

II. Three Types of Customers & What They Want Out of Self-Generation

- Understanding the customer's interest is the first step
- 1st customer type – the environmentalist. What they care about.
- 2nd customer type – the tinkerer. They want to build something (often farmers).
- 3rd customer type – the investor. They think there are \$\$ to be made.

III. Basic Concepts That Every Customer Needs to Understand

- Solar energy availability (maps); values for this area & what they mean
- Practical facts - solar (PV), kW output, weather factors, economics, inverters, batteries
- Wind classes (maps); values for this area; measured at 50 meters (164 feet) vs. 30 meters
- Practical facts - tower height, permits needed, kW turbine output, economics, capacity factor
- Basic concepts of net metering; rules in your state
- Tips and techniques for explaining to customers why we need these rules

V. Learning from the Experiences of Other Power Suppliers

- Wind generator case studies and demonstrations
- Solar PV case study in New York state -12.6 kW (farm), 10 kW (residential)
- Lessons learned in managing customer interest and perceptions
- How to develop a customer education plan

10:30 AM. – Quick Refreshment Break

VI. A List of Considerations for Customers

- Is there sufficient wind (or solar)? Have you measured it? How do you measure it?
- County/City zoning issues; electrical inspections; liability insurance
- Utility interconnection costs, requirements, and contracts
- Available state and federal incentives?
- Is a 15-year payback out-of-the-question for this customer?

VII. Key Tips for Power Suppliers

- To find the serious customers, charge a fee for utility's time
- Be neutral but supportive; consistency with interconnect charges
- Communication and documentation

VIII. Using Our Decision Chart Can Keep You On Track

- A visual "road map" to know each step in educating customers.
- Knowing when you have reached "the destination"

IX. Resources (Handouts) & Useful Web Sites

Adjourn (Can be full 1-day course or half-day)