

PORTLAND, Ore., Oct. 23, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- [Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance \(NEEA\)](#), in collaboration with its utility and energy efficiency partners, is helping build market momentum for heat pump water heater technology in the Northwest. To advance energy efficiency within the water heating product category, NEEA and its partners implemented a comprehensive program of specification development, product testing, consumer marketing, and contractor trainings.

Water heating accounts for 15 to 20 percent of electric energy use in homes with electric water heating. Compared to traditional electric water heaters, heat pump water heaters can save homeowners up to 50 percent on energy costs while still delivering the same amount of hot water. Heat pump water heater technology works like a refrigerator, but in reverse – using fans and an evaporator to pull warmth from the surrounding air and transfer it to water in the storage tank.

"The work we accomplished in collaboration with our utility, manufacturer and retail partners in 2012 and 2013 sets the stage for new innovations, new features and improved product designs that will help transform the market," said Jill Reynolds, heat pump water heater initiative manager, NEEA. "Part of developing new technologies is testing product quality. Together with our partners we tested heat pump water heaters in the field and launched a regional marketing promotion across the Northwest. We see huge potential regional energy savings from this technology."

Fifty-five percent of Northwest homes have electric water heaters. If all of those homes used heat pump water heaters specifically designed for the Northern climate, the region could save nearly 500 average megawatts (aMW) by 2025, the equivalent to powering all the homes in Seattle and Boise combined each year.

To set the stage for this technology, BPA conducted lab testing in 2009, followed by field demonstrations over the next several years which showed real energy savings from heat pump water heaters. Then in 2011, NEEA developed the Northern Climate Specification in collaboration with regional utilities, and energy efficiency allies and organizations to accelerate the technology in the region.

NEEA and its partners worked with national manufacturers to encourage them to adopt the specification and guided the installer base in the Northwest to introduce heat pump water heaters into the market through manufacturers and retailers. There are currently 14 Northern Climate-approved manufacturers producing heat pump water heaters to these specifications.

In 2012, NEEA partnered with Northwest utilities to create the Smart Water Heat Program, an initiative focused on promoting the education, development, and adoption of heat pump water heater technology to Northwest homeowners.

"The Smart Water Heat Program provides a common voice for utilities and contractors to reach out to homeowners in the region," said Stephanie Vasquez, energy efficiency program manager, residential HVAC systems and water heating, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). "The program has been successful in promoting heat pump water heaters to homeowners as well as educating installers."

Currently there are 104 Northwest contractors actively installing heat pump water heaters through the Smart Water Heat Program, with more than 20 qualified products on the market.

"Seattle City Light is committed to introducing our customers to quality energy-efficient products that will help reduce their energy use and heating bills at the same time," said Glenn Atwood, director of conservation resources division, Seattle City Light. "To help our customers embrace new technology such as heat pump water heaters, we provide incentives year round with additional rebates during in-store promotions."

NEEA and its partners built partnerships with national manufacturers and retailers to promote the benefits of heat pump water heaters in the Northwest. This leveraged partnership also provided a single point of contact for retailers and manufacturers to communicate with utilities, distributors and installers, helping accelerate their ability to get these products to market.

"In the next five years, regional retailers will have more choices on heat pump water heaters for their shelves as innovations in features and designs from manufacturers increase. This will continue to drive even more energy savings in homes across the Northwest," said Vasquez.

NEEA and its regional utility partners' long-term goal is to influence the passage of a federal standard requiring heat pump water heaters for all electric storage tanks greater than 40 gallons in size and will continue to test and rate heat pump water heater technology and products with manufacturers.

To watch a video on how NEEA works in the region to advance technologies such as heat pump water heaters, visit neea.org/HPWH.

About the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance The Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) is an alliance of more than 100 Northwest utilities and energy efficiency organizations working on behalf of more than 13 million energy consumers. NEEA leverages its strong regional partnerships to effect [market](#)

[transformation](#)

by accelerating the adoption of energy-efficient products, services and practices. Since 1997, NEEA and its partners – including Avista Utilities, Bonneville Power Administration, Chelan County PUD, Clark Public Utilities, Cowlitz PUD,

Eugene Water

& Electric Board, Energy Trust of

Oregon

, Idaho Power, NorthWestern Energy, Pacific Power, Puget Sound Energy, Seattle City Light, Snohomish County Public Utilities, and Tacoma Power – have saved enough energy to power more than 600,000 homes each year. Energy efficiency can offset most of our new demand for energy, saving money and keeping the Northwest a healthy and vibrant place to live.

www.neea.org

About BPABPA is a nonprofit federal agency that markets renewable hydropower from federal Columbia River dams, operates three-quarters of high-voltage transmission lines in the Northwest and funds one of the largest wildlife protection and restoration programs in the world. Energy efficiency is BPA's resource of choice. It lowers energy bills, has no carbon footprint, and reduces the need for costly, new power generation facilities and transmission lines. BPA and Northwest publicly-owned utilities achieve cost-effective energy savings by supporting efficiency programs in all sectors of the Northwest Economy, including [Energy](#)

[Smart Industrial](#)

[Energy Smart Grocer](#)

and

[Simple Steps, Smart Savings](#)

. Since 1980, BPA and its partners have saved over 1400 average megawatts. BPA also invests in research to develop and advance energy-saving technologies. The Northwest Power and Conservation Council sets the region's energy conservation agenda and BPA is committed to meeting 85 percent of the Northwest's future power needs with efficiency for the next 20 years. For more information, contact us at 503-230-5131 or visit

www.bpa.gov

About Seattle City Light Seattle City Light is the 10th largest public electric utility in the United States . It has some of the lowest cost customer rates of any urban utility, providing reliable, renewable and environmentally responsible power to nearly 1 million Seattle area residents. City Light has been greenhouse gas neutral since 2005, the first electric utility in the nation to achieve that distinction.

About Smart Water Heat Smart Water Heat is an initiative of the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) focused on promoting the education, development and adoption of heat pump water heater technology that is best suited to meet the needs of homeowners in the Northwest.

SOURCE Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA)

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