



# Building Efficiency for Commercial Construction

*Energy Efficiency Pays. Now More Than Ever.*

## Program Update — January 2006 *for Commercial Design and Construction Professionals*

### 2005 Program Exceeds Goals

The first year of the Building Efficiency program was a success, thanks to all of you who helped us exceed our goals. The energy savings goal (kWh/yr) was exceeded by nearly 30 percent. The goal for peak demand reduction (kW) was exceeded by more than 60 percent. That was accomplished while spending less than one-third of the incentive budget. We are looking forward to continued collaboration this year with goals – and an incentive budget – that are twice as high as 2005.

### New Commercial Building Tax Deduction

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 includes a new federal tax incentive to improve the energy efficiency of commercial buildings, effective this month. The “Commercial Building Tax Deduction” applies to expenses incurred for energy efficient improvements made by a building owner.

The deduction can be as much as \$1.80 per square foot of floor area, with allowances for partial deductions for improvements in interior lighting, HVAC and hot water systems, and building envelope systems. The provision is effective for property placed in service from Jan. 1, 2006 through Dec. 31, 2007.

To learn more about this benefit for energy efficient new buildings, visit the Commercial Building Tax Deduction Coalition Web site at [www.efficientbuildings.org](http://www.efficientbuildings.org).

### Occupancy Sensor Overview

Occupancy sensors may be small, but they can save a lot. These sensors detect the presence or absence of people and turn lights on and off accordingly. They can cut lighting energy use by 50 percent or more. But, savings for some locations can be much less. That’s why it’s important to carefully consider a wide variety of issues before installing an occupancy sensor.

These sensors work best in spaces that are often unoccupied, including some offices, storerooms, restrooms, stairwells, office lounges, and conference rooms. Open-plan office spaces, where multiple people may be moving in and

out over the course of the workday, are not good candidates for occupancy sensors.

Two sensor technologies dominate: infrared and ultrasonic. Infrared sensors detect temperature changes in a room and work well where the entire room is within the sensor’s field of view. Ultrasonic sensors use high frequency sound, much like bats do, to detect motion (even around corners). Dual-technology sensors use both methods, increasing accuracy and flexibility, but at a higher price.

Where not already required by code, occupancy sensors can earn a Building Efficiency incentive of \$25 each.

### Program Participants Speak Out

Three Building Efficiency program participants are pictured and quoted in an Idaho Power advertisement in the Jan. 16–20 issue of the *Idaho Business Review*. “Every penny counts,” said Pat Beale, Ada County Parks director. “The incentive dollars we received helped lower our construction costs.”

### Upcoming Training Opportunities

The International Building Operators Association (IBOA) has a Level I Building Operator Certification class scheduled for Boise Jan. 23–27. If interested, contact IBOA at (208) 345-3072 for more details.

Please note: The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) LEED™ training class planned for January has been postponed.

### For More Program Information

Do you know of any projects, planned or underway, that may qualify for this incentive? Are the owners or developers unaware of this program? If so, please share this information with them. For answers to other questions, call Curt Nichols at (208) 388-6484.