



# Building Efficiency for Commercial Construction

*Energy Efficiency Pays. Now More Than Ever.*

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

### New Custom Project Option

Idaho Power has just made its first Custom Project incentive payment, a new feature of the Building Efficiency program, to a Meridian cold storage facility. Although the installation of energy-saving doors was not on the program's list of energy efficiency measures, Idaho Power evaluated the project under the new Custom option to award the incentive. The facility will receive an incentive payment based on the expected electric energy savings.

More Custom Project applications are welcome. We will consider anything that can show electric energy savings. Unlike the list of measures on the Menu form, all Custom applications must submit a pre-application and be pre-approved. If you have a project in mind or have questions about the new option, please contact Curt Nichols at (208) 388-6484.

### Idaho Power's Integrated Resource Plan

Work on Idaho Power's 2006 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) is under way. This is a 10-year plan that is updated every two years. The 2004 IRP identified the need for a building efficiency program for commercial construction. The 2006 IRP will analyze the cost-effectiveness of a commercial building retrofit program. Final results from the process are due this summer and additional program development, if any, will follow later this year.

### Premium Efficiency Air Conditioners

Idaho code requires air conditioners with a Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) of at least 10 for units that have a cooling capacity of five tons or less. For units that size, Idaho Power offers an incentive of \$100 per ton for the purchase and installation of units with a SEER rating of 13 or higher.

A recent federal rule requires all new air conditioning units of this size manufactured in the U.S. to be rated at SEER 13 or higher. However, since many SEER 10 units are still available for purchase—especially in Idaho and other states that have not raised their own code to SEER 13—the Building Efficiency program will continue to offer incentives for purchasing SEER 13 units.

Oregon's commercial code will change to require SEER 13 in October. After that time, projects in Oregon and Idaho with SEER 13 equipment will no longer be eligible for this incentive.

SEER 13 air conditioning units can cut cooling energy use by 30 percent over the code minimum, SEER 10 units. Along with the \$100-per-ton incentive, that makes specifying the more efficient air conditioning units more cost-effective than ever.

### New Web Resources

There are two new resources that can help you design energy efficient buildings.

Getting to Fifty ([www.advancedbuildings.net/index.htm](http://www.advancedbuildings.net/index.htm)) is a database of buildings that were designed with energy performance 50 percent or more above American Society of Heating Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standard 90.1-2001. This is the first time all the information has been gathered into one place online, putting the world of high-performance buildings at your fingertips.

Building Green ([www.nrdc.org/buildinggreen](http://www.nrdc.org/buildinggreen)) is a new site organized as a five-step guide to planning an efficient and environmentally responsible (green) building project. It offers tips on how to find a green architect, streamline design and construction, and achieve a return on the investment.

### Upcoming Training Opportunities

On April 20, the Boise chapter of the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA-Boise) luncheon will focus on the new federal tax deductions for energy efficient commercial buildings. At this lunch meeting, you will learn more about how energy efficiency can cut your firm's federal income taxes. To register, call (208) 377-5775 or e-mail [bae@bomaboise.org](mailto:bae@bomaboise.org).

### 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.