



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Community Stakeholders

**CC:** Resource Management Commission

**FROM:** Debbie Kimberly, Vice President, Distributed Energy Services

**DATE:** August 16, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Report on the August 3rd Energy Efficiency Resource Fair

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### Executive Summary

City Council Resolution No. 20120927-083 directs Austin Energy to report on a year-long stakeholder process that provides an opportunity for the community to offer recommendations regarding energy efficiency goals and strategies. As part of our ongoing effort to carry out this resolution, our third stakeholder meeting was held on Saturday, August 3, 2013. In previous meetings, stakeholders gave recommendations to increase energy efficiency education through community outreach and by creating partnerships with other departments. Austin Energy collaborated with the Austin Water Utility, Austin Resource Recovery, the Customer Assistance Program, and the AE Marketing team to host a 3 hour Energy Efficiency Resource Fair. The fair was an open house event that took place at the Austin Recreation Center on Shoal Creek Blvd. It was publicized to the community as an opportunity to “share your ideas and learn about programs that help save money on utility bills.”

### Event Promotion

Invitations were sent to 179 stakeholders and additional marketing efforts were implemented to promote the event. Additional promotion and advertising for the event included:

#### **Paid Media**

- Austin American Statesman (2)
- The Villager
- Nokoa The Observer
- Arriba
- El Mundo

#### **Additional Promotion**

- Article in AE Green Building e-newsletter to 1200 AE customers
- Event posted on online community calendars
- Posted event information on Energy Efficiency Stakeholder website page
- Flyers posted at Austin Recreation Center

- Flyers distributed at AE Solar meeting
- Article entry in Monday Morning report issued to all AE employees
- Large format promotional posters at North Branch and East Austin Utility Payment Centers
- Created an event banner featured on AE website homepage
- Posted event AE Facebook page
- Posted event on AE Green Building Facebook page
- Flyers distributed at Austin Neighborhood Council (ANC) monthly meeting. ANC emailed flyers to 100+ HOA members

Event Format and Participation

Ten exhibit booths were represented.

- Residential
- Multifamily
- Commercial
- Limited Income
- Solar
- Green Building
- Austin Energy Marketing
- Austin Water Utility
- Austin Resource Recovery
- Share Your Ideas

Attendees were given an event passport and directed to visit all of the exhibitors to receive a stamp. Completed passports could be redeemed for a prize and entry into grand prize drawings to be announced at a later date. Attendees could also participate in 30-minute brainstorming sessions held during the fair. Despite significant additional marketing efforts, participation for this event was lower than expected but consistent with our previous stakeholder meetings. Invitee counts listed in the table below are for email invitations only and do not account for other outreach methods.

	<b>Saturday, Feb 9 9 – 12pm</b>	<b>Monday, May 6 6-8 PM</b>	<b>Saturday, Aug 3 12-3pm</b>
Invitees	117	175	179
Attendees	35	20	30
AE/City Staff	23	11	21

Stakeholder Feedback

Community feedback on utility-specific programs and marketing strategies were gathered through surveys. Feedback on energy efficiency programs were gathered at the Share Your Ideas booth and during the brainstorming sessions.

*Utility Survey*

Seventeen attendees completed the utility survey. The survey questions were a collaboration between Austin Resource Recovery, Austin Water Utility, and Austin Energy. Participants were asked the following questions:

- Have you heard of Austin Resource Recovery’s Recycle Right Campaign?
- How confident are you that you know which items are accepted in your blue recycling cart?

- Have you heard about the City of Austin’s Zero Waste by 2040 goal?
- What Drought Response Watering Stage is Austin currently in?
  - Do you know your watering schedule?
- Have you recently seen or heard an Austin Water advertisement?
- What do you currently do to reduce your electricity use?
- Which Austin Energy, Austin Water Utility, Austin Resource Recovery or City of Austin conservation and rebate programs are you aware of?
- How do you like to receive energy efficiency, water saving, recycling, or utility information?
- Would you be interested in learning more about our energy efficiency programs and how you can reduce your energy use and save money?

A preliminary review of the survey input shows a correlation between media advertisement and the public’s awareness about our programs. For example, when asked about Austin’s current watering stage, over 60% of the participants correctly answered “Stage 2”. The same percentage of people said that they have heard an Austin Water advertisement on TV, radio, internet, and in the newspaper. When asked what they do to reduce electricity use, the majority of people picked behavioral change as a method to reduce electricity use. Only 3 of the surveyed attendees participated in Austin Energy programs. However, over half of the participants who completed a survey would be interested in learning more about our energy efficiency programs and how to reduce energy use and save money. The top 3 ways they like to receive energy efficiency, water saving, recycling, or utility information is through email, website, and TV.

*Marketing Survey*

At our Austin Energy marketing booth, attendees were also asked how they prefer to receive information (print, digital, social media, radio, etc.) and how familiar are they with the AE, our programs, and what they do with AE postcards received in the mail. General feedback indicated a need for more information about our programs and more information in Spanish. Some reported that mailers do not work because they consider them “junk” mail. Others reported that they would like to see more testimonials from customers who have participated in our energy efficiency programs.

*Share Your Ideas and Brainstorming Sessions*

Our goal was to give stakeholders an opportunity to share their ideas and to capture new ideas on our energy efficiency programs. Participants were guided by the following questions:

- What program ideas can you recommend for Austin Energy to investigate?
  - What energy efficiency or customer needs will this program meet?
  - How does this program fit within the current program structure?
  - Are you aware of funding sources for this program?
  - What are your recommendations for marketing this program?
- Do you have suggestions for revamping or revitalizing current programs?

Approximately 20 responses were posted on the Share Your Ideas wall and 4 people attended one or more of the 30-minute brainstorming sessions. While some of these program suggestions are similar to those from previous stakeholder meetings, others proposed new program offerings. Examples of input included:

- rebates for DIY energy efficiency in which customers would receive rebate money for doing energy efficiency on their own
- increased interaction at community events and with the environmental community so that more people learn about Austin Energy programs
- resources to find energy efficient apartments for those wanting to conserve energy
- increased spending for low income customers above what is currently spent
- comprehensive commercial rebate programs
- increased operational efficiency in commercial settings

A complete list of the verbatim comments can be viewed on our Energy Efficiency Stakeholder Process webpage (<http://www.austinenergy.com/go/eestakeholder>).

#### Continuous Action

Austin Energy will continue to provide monthly updates to the RMC and stakeholders on the progress made as a result of the input from the stakeholder meetings. Next steps are to update our dedicated web page to provide relevant information pertaining to the stakeholder process and to begin developing plans for our next stakeholder meeting. We will continue engaging our stakeholders through email and information posted to the web.

Our final meeting in this year-long process is planned for late fall. Details will be provided in subsequent RMC meetings.

Thank you for your time, support, and input. I welcome your questions and comments as we proceed through this year-long process.