The Smart Energy Design Assistance Center (SEDAC) supports the Small Business Smart Energy program (SB$E) to increase the efficient use of energy throughout Illinois. SEDAC is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and is managed by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in partnership with the Geothermal Heat Pump Consortium.

SEDAC EVENTS

SEDAC Training Sessions: Energy Basics for Small Business
In 2006, SEDAC will host training sessions to teach small business owners how to evaluate their opportunities to save money by calculating energy quantities, completing an energy audit, and assessing technologies available for saving energy. To request a no cost session, call (800) 214-7954.

SB$E Sustainable Building Webcast Archive
An archived version of the Webcast, originally broadcast on January 18, 2006, is now available at http://webcast.SEDAC.org. Please visit the site to hear experts discuss how small businesses and area practitioners in Illinois and Missouri save energy and money. CDs of the webcast are available. Email info@sedac.org to request a copy.

SEDAC NEWS

Illinois electricity rates may be on the rise
A nine-year rate freeze will be lifted at the end of 2006. In response, on January 24, 2006, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) unanimously approved a “reverse auction” process that would enable four of the state’s major electric utilities to bid for the power-supply needed to meet their customers’ demand. This process begins at a price set by an auction manager, and then the electric utilities bid down their pricing offers until all their capacity needs are met. The participating utilities must meet approximately 27,500 megawatts of capacity, which would make the Illinois program the largest power auction in the United States. Already successfully used to meet customer demand in New Jersey, the Illinois bid process is set to begin January 1, 2007.

The Citizens Utility Board (CUB) and the Illinois Attorney General’s office have expressed concern that the auction process may force consumers to pay unlimited rate hikes without requiring the electric utilities to ensure that the rates they charge are “just and reasonable” – as is called for in state law. The ICC expressed confidence that this process would provide consumers with “the lowest cost electricity available at this time.” CUB continues to have reservations, citing the fact that electric rates in New Jersey increased by 15 percent immediately following the implementation of a similar auction and suggesting that more price increases are possible.

According to the Illinois Consumers Organized for Reliable Electricity (CORE) industry experts are anticipating an increase in electricity rates when the rate freeze is lifted - perhaps 20 - 25 percent over three years. CORE is lobbying for a phase-in of the new rates to avoid serious hardship for residential and small business customers.

To help protect against volatile energy prices, the ICC has stated that it will develop rules to encourage the use of more, low-cost renewable energy sources along with demand side management and energy efficiency programs. The prognosis for higher energy costs next year makes it more likely that the free services offered by SEDAC could be of even greater value to small business owners struggling to manage energy costs. Energy efficiency investments are the best way to hold costs down now and in the future.

If you’re interested in using SEDAC architects and engineers to review your energy usage, simulate your building, and recommend new building design or existing building retrofit options that will reduce your business’s energy consumption, please visit us at: www.SEDAC.org or call 1-800-214-7954.
ABOUT SEDAC

In 2005, SEDAC accomplished many goals to fulfill its mission of reducing the overall use and cost of energy in the state of Illinois. In 2006, SEDAC will continue to provide energy assistance to a diverse, geographical cross-section of Illinois businesses. We are particularly interested in identifying potential clients whose energy costs are limiting their business growth in the following market sectors:

• Convenience stores and Grocery Stores
• Travel plazas and truck stops
• Lodging
• Assisted Living (for profit)
• Private Health Care (for profit)
• Private Pre-school & Day Care (for profit)
• Greenhouses
• Restaurants

SEDAC has experience working with clients located in rural and urban areas that range from small, independent businesses, such as auto and retail shops, bowling alleys and grocery stores, to large retail chains like Walgreens and Staples.

Our clients have realized that our free, customized energy audits can help them immediately reduce their energy use and cost – improving their long-term profitability. In 2006, we are actively seeking customers who would like our assistance in helping their businesses become more energy and cost efficient.

For assistance, please contact us using the information below.

SE DAC ENERGY FOCUS

SEDAC TOP 12: ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURE #1

Even if you choose not to receive a customized energy audit, consider implementing some of SEDAC’s top 12 recommended energy conservation measures. Each month the SEDAC newsletter will feature some basic information on each and how your business can realize the energy savings benefits.

T8 fluorescent lighting with electronic ballasts

T8 fluorescent lights are a beneficial alternative to older fluorescent lamps, typically T12s. “T” stands for Tubular; the number represents eighths of an inch in diameter. T8s are more energy efficient, last longer, require less maintenance, and provide superior light quality. The T8 lamps are more efficient than the T12 lights largely because they use electronic ballasts and operate at higher frequencies, instead of magnetic ballasts used in older designs. A ballast is the device that controls the input power to the lamp. Because T8s emit more light per lamp, additional energy can be saved by using fewer lamps to achieve the same lighting level.

There is almost no flicker with a T8 lamp and no noise from the ballast. T8 conversions typically improve the overall light output and light quality and can enhance productivity in the workplace.

To distinguish between T12s and T8s, compare the diameter of the lamp. T12s are 1.5 inches in diameter; a T8 is 1 inch in diameter.

A good source for lighting information is the Lighting Research Center at www.lrc.rpi.edu

For further assistance in identifying your light sources and in locating suppliers of T8 fluorescent lamps and electronic ballasts, please contact SEDAC.

To participate in the SB$E program, please contact us at: Smart Energy Design Assistance Center, 1 East St. Mary’s Road, Champaign, IL 61820 (800) 214-7954 info@SEDAC.org www.sedac.org