

Sen. Cowles: Latest report reaffirms success of Focus on Energy

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MADISON- A report that was recently released by the state Public Service Commission (PSC) titled Energy Efficiency and Renewable Resource Program Activities in Wisconsin, January-December 2018 highlighted the successes of the state's Focus on Energy program. The structure of this unique energy efficiency financial and technical assistance mechanism has been recognized nationwide as a model for forward thinking on energy use and conservation. Based on the latest report, Focus continues to shine today as one of the most cost-effective energy efficiency programs in the country by achieving the highest rate of energy savings per dollar spend.

"From supporting projects in buildings as large as the lighting, boilers, and HVAC system at Lambeau Field and as small as your bedside lamp, Focus on Energy has shown itself to be an accessible program for all Wisconsinites," said Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay). "By helping residents and businesses become more energy efficient, Focus can create jobs, spur economic development, and improve environmental quality throughout our state."

Highlights of the second four-year period for the Focus program from 2015 to 2018 show that the number of small businesses participating in Focus on Energy grew by 46% and that the number of residential participants in rural areas grew by 29%. During this four-year period, every dollar invested in energy efficiency yielded \$3.62 in benefits and, when economic benefits are added, the ratio increases to a \$5.16 pay-off for every \$1 invested.

The Focus program also yields tremendous benefits for human and environmental

health. The 42 billion kilowatt-hours and 1.5 billion therms in energy savings during this period accounted for over 28 million tons of avoided carbon dioxide emissions. That's the equivalent of taking six million cars off the road for an entire year! Finally and perhaps most importantly, among the 128,000 residential participants, 55,698 rural participants, and 6,135 non-residential participants in 2018 alone, the customer satisfaction rate hit a new high of 9.1 on a 10-point scale.

"I'd like to congratulate APTIM, the administrator of Focus on Energy, along with the PSC Commissioners and staff and others involved in the Focus program for once again showing just how successful the Focus program can be," Senator Cowles continued. "I'll plan to continue to support Focus on Energy and will work to further promote energy efficiency across our state. I also look forward to seeing more local investments from Focus leading to more positive statewide results in the years to come."

Focus on Energy was originally formed by the Legislature in the 1999-2000 Legislative Session, however, it wasn't until the 2005-2006 Legislative Session that the program was substantially boosted by creating a stable and sustainable funding source in 2005 Wisconsin Act 141. Senator Cowles chaired the Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Information Technology which authored Act 141 in bipartisan fashion thanks to recommendations from the Final Report of the Governor's Task Force on Energy Efficiency and Renewables, October 2004. Senator Cowles continues to champion the Focus on Energy program through today.