Empowering the Region with Timely and Granular Data

Five years ago, the alliance’s Commercial + Industrial Lighting Regional Strategy Market Collaborative identified the availability of timely, granular lighting pricing data as a critical need for the region’s lighting programs. Given rapidly changing LED prices, it was very difficult to design informed incentive programs without precise and up-to-date pricing data.

“When planning for a program it is imperative that we have accurate data on costs,” said Tom Lienhard, Chief Energy Efficiency Engineer at Avista. “This helps to maintain both our cost effectiveness as well as determine correct incentive amounts to match what we promise our customers and our regulators.”

To support Northwest energy efficiency programs with more valuable and actionable data, a region-wide user group set to work. This group was comprised of representatives from Avista Utilities, Bonneville Power Administration, Energy Trust of Oregon, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council and NEEA staff. The user group developed a tool that collects granular lighting pricing data from the websites of three major distributors and retailers.

NEEA’s data team then cleans the data for discrepancies and packages it for easy use in an informative, interactive dashboard. As a result, pricing data that once took 5-6 months to reach the desks of program planners and implementers is now available in 1-2 weeks.

“The near real-time data from the Lighting Data Dashboard has not only allowed better planning of those costs, but also allowed faster changes during the measure life in our programs. By using data-based costs, we are able to squeeze more savings out of our resources.”
- Tom Lienhard, Chief Energy Efficiency Engineer, Avista

Beyond Lighting and Pricing: The Dashboard’s Next Evolution

For their efforts to develop the lighting data dashboard, the user group won the 2018 Leadership in Energy Efficiency Award for Innovation. And the impact of this tool is not limited to lighting: the alliance has already expanded this strategy to support non-lighting programs by collecting and sharing timely pricing data for a variety of efficient products including heat pump water heaters.
Looking ahead, the dashboard’s value is expected to grow. In early 2019, NEEA staff added market share and regional sales data to the dashboard. Led by a new user group including representatives from Pacific Power, Nexant, Snohomish County PUD and NEEA staff, this next phase of the dashboard will provide an important piece of the market data puzzle so that energy efficiency program designers can understand what consumers are buying or avoiding in the retail space in addition to pricing trends.