



Meeting Minutes

SEEA Working Group Meeting

Sam Nunn Federal Center

Atlanta, Georgia

February 1, 2006

Meeting begins at 9:10 a.m.

Chris White of SEEA welcomes those in attendance and gives a brief recap of recent SEEA activities, which include the filing of SEEA incorporation papers, the development and printing of the first SEEA brochure, the new SEEA website, two state SEEA Outreach meetings, and the SEEA Tax Incentive Workshop for Energy Efficiency Buildings in the Southeast (Tax Workshop).

Harry Misuriello of the Alliance to Save Energy discusses the Tax Workshop. Approximately 175 people attended the workshop. An Internal Revenue Service (IRS) representative attended the meeting to observe and report findings back to her superiors. The IRS representative was not allowed to speak of the IRS guidelines since they were yet to be released. Harry believes that building a relationship with the IRS will be beneficial to SEEA and its constituents.

Harry also discussed the positive feedback he received about the Tax Workshop. Attendees found the workshop very valuable. The new residential information was the most complete and the commercial tax deduction information not so complete (due to delay of release of IRS guidelines). Attendees requested that another workshop be held when the guidelines are released. The partnership networking session was also deemed a success by participants.

Danny Orlando of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) suggested that SEEA do a presentation on the tax incentives at the Southface Energy Institute's (Southface) *Green Prints Conference* March 23 and 24th. Ben Thorpe of Southface briefly discussed the upcoming Green Prints Conference (Conference). Harry Misuriello of the Alliance to Save Energy thought that there may be an opportunity for SEEA to speak about the tax incentives at one of the Conference tabletalk lunches or set-up an exhibit.

Cyrus Bhedwar of the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) spoke up and proposed that SEEA consider having the Georgia SEEA State Tour Meeting the day before (March 22) the Conference since many potential attendees would be in town already.

Harry Misuriello stated that the federal tax incentives only come around once in a while, are politically benign and federally funded, and have the potential to save nearly 2 Quads of energy. Harry stated SEEA is the perfect organization to promote these tax incentives in the Southeastern United States. From his various conversations at the tax workshop, Harry indicated that the commercial building interests want to see the tax incentives extended beyond 2007. The commercial building interests indicated that there is not enough time to implement the tax incentives at the commercial level.

Cyrus Bhedwar asked if a 501(c)(3) organization, such as SEEA once it is incorporated, is able to lobby for an extension for the tax incentives. Harry Misuriello indicated that SEEA could assist at the grassroots level. Cyrus suggested that SEEA states and stakeholders make solid arguments to extend the tax incentives and that SEEA should discuss plans on how to do this. SEEA has the ability to compile information and coordinate groups to help with the extension campaign.

Chris White, Interim Director of SEEA, stated that the Southern States Energy Board (SSEB) and its member governors may be able to discuss ideas on how to push for an extension to the tax incentives, especially considering the Southeastern communities have been impacted by devastating hurricanes this past year, particularly Hurricane Katrina.

Kathryn Baskin of the SSEB stated that the SSEB governor's meeting in July will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana and policies discussed at these meeting need to show a regional impact and have a regional influence. Kathryn believes the time is right for SSEB to push something, such as an extension of the tax incentives, on the federal government. Actually, the theme of this year's governor's meeting is "America's Energy Security."

Harry Misuriello asked Kathryn if there are any opportunities for SEEA to brief the SSEB on the tax incentives. Kathryn stated the SSEB annual meetings tend to be legislative briefings. She identified the SSEB/National Governor's Association (NGA) meeting at the end of February (check agenda – not set) and suggested SEEA should speak to Carol Werner of Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) for opportunities. Also, Carolyn Drake of SSEB could be a contact person as well.

Richard Heinisch of Lithonia Lighting stated that long-term energy savings should be identified to make a better argument for extending the tax incentives, in addition to the IRS delay in issuing the guidelines.

Cyrus Bhedwar stated that Georgia has a goal for state consumption to be reduced by 25 percent by 2012 (Article 1 of state energy plan) and that the tax incentives are a good tool to help Georgia meet its goal.

Ben Thorpe was asked to briefly discuss Southface's Earthcraft Homes. Ben stated that large production builders construct ENERGY STAR[®] or energy-efficient buildings and Earthcraft Homes. The Earthcraft Homes program is being extended to six states: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. The Earthcraft Homes program is also evolving into a tiered-system: the higher the tier, the more energy efficient the house. Thus far, 3,000 homes have been certified as Earthcraft Homes. Earthcraft Homes is also working on extending its

program to include multi-family homes. It was stated that all Earthcraft homes built in South Carolina have to be ENERGY STAR[®] homes.

Cyrus Bhedwar stated that the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnership (NEEP) contacted GEFA about doing a window workshop with Southface Energy Institute somewhere in the Southeast. This would be a sales-oriented training for ENERGY STAR[®] windows. It was not clear if the Efficient Windows Collaborative (EWC) would be involved at all. Chris White mentioned that Elizabeth Robertson of GEFA would be presenting SEEA to a southeast regional section of NASEO on February 6, 2006. This is a generous opportunity for SEEA to get exposed to a key partner in our mission.

Danny Orlando stated that the SE Electric Membership Cooperatives (EMCs) are meeting in Gatlinburg in late April to discuss marketing strategies. Danny Orlando will present at this meeting to promote the EMC's joining of the ENERGY STAR[®] program. Currently, Southern Company and all the operating companies are Energy Star partners. Each operating company has its own business model for participating as an Energy Star partner. For instance, Alabama Power is participating in the appliances program. Several EMC's in Georgia are also considering joining the Energy Star program.

Kelly Ross Gillespie gave a brief review of the SEEA state meetings that were held in November 2005. Based on the North Carolina state meeting briefing, Danny Orlando thought that a video interview with one or two of the North Carolina Commissioners on energy efficiency might make a great impact in the region.

Harry Misuriello gave a quick briefing on the Georgia Demand-Side Management (DSM) Working Group for the year 2007 planning year. The 2007 integrated resource planning (IRP) process in Georgia begins on February 14, 2006. Georgia Power and Savannah Power are expected to submit their DSM programs to the Georgia Public Service Commission. Harry also mentioned that the Arkansas Public Service Commission is beginning to consider demand-side management programs and is holding a energy efficiency workshop on February 21, 2006 of which the Alliance to Save Energy will be attending.

Kate Offringa of the North American Insulation Manufacturers Association (NAIMA) stated that there is no seat for energy efficiency within the Building Code Council. It was discussed further how SEEA could work with its energy efficiency partners, such as Southface, EPA, and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), to try to promote energy efficiency within the Building Code Council. Danny Orlando stated that the ENERGY STAR[®] Home standard is the building code in Frisco, Texas. In fact, nearly 40,000 homes in Texas meet the ENERGY STAR[®] level.

Richard Heinisch stated that the SEEA Working Group needs to stop focusing and reviewing the past and needs to begin focusing on the future steps of SEEA, such as electing a Board of Directors and establishing working groups (i.e. building code working group) to make recommendations for future projects and activities until committees can be officially established. It was agreed by the working group that SEEA needs to put together a regional version of Rebuild American and determine how it can advocate for higher energy efficiency standards in the Southeast. It was also stated that SEEA needs to be a facilitator of change to promote tax

incentives and advocate for building codes and energy efficiency programs with utilities and state energy offices.

Harry Misuriello stated that direct program offerings in SEEA will not be offered until a SEEA staff is in place. Kate Offringa and Harry Misuriello stated that SEEA needs to take advantage of the tax incentive opportunity to gain recognition.

It was noted that the Southeastern Building Conference (SBC) will be held in August 2006 in Orlando, Florida. One-third of the SBC exhibition will be designated as an “E-Zone” which will showcase energy efficiency building products and practices. In addition, Southface will be holding workshops in several states to educate builders how to comply with building codes.

SEEA membership was brought up and it was agreed that SEEA is not capable of membership at this time. However, it was suggested by Richard Heinisch that working groups be created and volunteers recruited to participate in these working groups to start moving on program areas until SEEA is able to have a membership, committees, and a Board of Directors.

Action items in this area include:

- Identify and describe topical areas for SEEA working groups (i.e. building codes). A www.seea.us based BLOG (weblog) could help facilitate the open exchange of information and details for the working groups.
- Request volunteers from existing SEEA interested parties to participate in designated working groups to gather information and make recommendations to the Board of Directors (when it is established). This will enable SEEA to acquire funding faster for specific program activities once SEEA is incorporated.
- Develop a SEEA workplan.

Danny Orlando cautioned the group of large working groups, stating that a bureaucracy could kill a working group’s effectiveness if it gets too large.

Ben Thorpe stated that SEEA needs to consolidate SEEA's message into a concrete form, such as a charter which states specific statements, such as principals and recommendations. Ben also inquired about the relationship between SEEA and the Alliance to Save Energy. Harry Misuriello responded that SEEA would be established as a subsidiary of the Alliance to Save Energy. It was also stated that in order to get SEEA up and running with a two-person staff, SEEA would initially need approximately \$500,000. SEEA funding opportunities included grants, foundation monies, and potential membership fees. There was a proposal to have an extraordinary fund raising effort to get SEEA kicked off. The fundraiser would ask those companies and organizations that will be members of SEEA to give more the first year. The expectation is that the following years will fall into a lower and predictable membership fee structure. The extra money gathered by the fund drive would allow SEEA to have adequate staffing and resources to function adequately and to attract and serve more members.

Kelly Ross Gillespie will distribute a presentation she put together summarizing the energy efficiency programs and funding structures of the other regional energy efficiency alliances in the United States.

Some final statements as the meeting closed:

- Get Board of Directors established as soon as possible
- DOE Atlanta Regional Office closing in June 2006. SEEA may be looked upon by southeastern states to fill the technical assistance gap that the Atlanta-DOE office will leave upon its closing.
- A SEEA workplan will help steer DOE to SEEA for certain programs.
- SEEA has an opportunity to help provide State Energy Offices (SEO's) important services of outreach and coordination for energy efficiency.

Meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Attendees List

Name	Company/Organization	Email	Phone
Kathryn Baskin	Southern States Energy Board	baskin@sseb.org	770.242.7712
Cyrus Bhedwar	Georgia Environmental Facilities Auth.	cyrus@gefa.ga.gov	404.584.1077
Kelly Ross Gillespie	Alliance to Save Energy	kross@ase.org	202.530.2244
Richard Heinisch	Lithonia Lighting	rheinisch@lithonia.com	770.860.2048
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