

SERG 2007/2008 ANNUAL REPORT

SERG formed seven years ago to help homeowners reduce the amount of energy they consume, avoid the hardship caused by ever-rising energy prices and reduce their impact on climate change. SERG implemented numerous successful programs to address the wave of major increases and turmoil to energy markets this year.

Weatherization Workshops – In the fall of 2007, SERG worked with Efficiency Vermont to develop a series of workshops to teach homeowners how to cost-effectively reduce home energy use. The workshop covers the health, safety and comfort issues involved in home air sealing and describes services, products and techniques homeowners can employ to do the job themselves or hire it out. More than 125 people attended three workshops held in Putney, Montpelier and Thetford. Energy committees throughout the state expressed great interest in holding similar workshops. This success, coupled with an even greater demand due to large fuel price increases this summer, prompted the effort to organize Button Up Vermont, a series of 100 home energy-saving workshops held throughout Vermont in the fall of 2008. Central Vermont Community Action Council (CVCAC) received a grant from the State of Vermont to organize this effort and hired SERG to develop the educational curriculum. SERG helped with the outreach for the overall effort and was the lead presenter at eight workshops throughout the Upper Valley. We are working to expand this program to New Hampshire and remain available to present the Button Up workshop to additional towns, civic groups and businesses.

SERG Residential Energy Audits and Assessment Services – Requests for energy audits soared due to the high rise in heating fuel prices. To meet this demand, SERG expanded its Home Performance Assessment services in the Upper Valley by subcontracting audits to two recently certified contractors. From June to November, 2008, we completed a total of 50 home audits, up significantly from the 15 audits we completed in the 18 previous months. We are currently on pace to average about 10 audits a month. We also plan to continue growing our auditing services with the purchase of an infrared camera in Fall '08.

SERG Energy Alliance and Solar Hot Water Challenge – SERG added several contractors to its list of Energy Alliance dealers. These dealers offer discounts on energy efficiency and renewable energy products and services, such as wood stoves, solar hot water and PV systems and weatherization supplies, to those who make a tax-deductible contribution of \$50 or more to SERG. You can view the complete list of Energy Alliance business partners and the discounts they offer at www.serg-info.org/energy-alliance. We also worked with the Norwich Energy Committee and the First Branch Sustainability Network to organize a solar hot water workshop and challenge to Upper Valley residents. The goal was to encourage at least 50 homeowners to install solar hot water systems. We are well on the way to accomplishing that goal.

Vermont & New Hampshire Town Energy Committees – SERG continued its efforts to form new town energy committees, consult with existing committees and network with

committees throughout Vermont and New Hampshire. In Vermont, we are working through the Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network (VECAN), a network of 65-plus committees, up from just 30 in 2007. Our goal is to have an energy committee or initiative in every Vermont town by 2012. VECAN hosted its second annual statewide gathering of energy committees Dec. 2007, with more than 50 representatives sharing experiences, discussing successes and challenges and considering collaborations. VECAN has also launched a website www.vecan.net to provide town energy committees with easy access to resources and facilitate communication and information-sharing among energy organizers.

SERG has worked for several years with numerous NH town energy committees in the Upper Valley. This year we began networking with the NH Local Energy Committee Working Group which is networking with more than 90 energy committees throughout the state. This spring SERG organized the first Upper Valley regional meeting of representatives from 14 Vermont and New Hampshire town energy committees plus representatives from regional housing, food and transportation organizations. The purpose was for organizations to share what they have been working on and to discuss collaborative regional projects.

Public Education and Policy – SERG continues to educate the public through additional workshops, compact fluorescent bulb sales, letters to the editor, participation in forums and regular outreach. Our database has now grown to more than 1900 names. We continue to work with town energy committees, individuals, state agencies and other organizations to support and promote energy conservation, efficiency and renewal initiatives.

SERG Business Plan

With help from the Executive Services Corps and a grant from the Upper Valley Community Foundation, SERG developed a business plan this year to help guide our actions for the future.

SERG Board – SERG added two new board members this year: Bruce 'Buff' McLaughry and Jeff Bernstein. Buff McLaughry grew up in and returned to the Upper Valley after graduating from Middlebury College. He joined family's Real Estate business, McLaughry Associates in 1980 and helped grow and merge the firm with two other firms in 2007, creating the largest Real Estate firm in Northern NH/VT, Lang McLaughry Spera. As Chief Operating Officer, Buff's interests include changing real estate environment to allow buyers and sellers time-of-purchase home audits and future information on home efficiency through the web, MLS and closings.

Jeff Bernstein is President and Managing Director of BCK Law, P.C., a firm concentrating on renewable energy projects and sustainable development, technology, corporate and regulatory matters, primarily in Vermont and Massachusetts. He represents many municipal entities and non-profit environmental and renewable energy organizations across New England and elsewhere. He served as special counsel to the Washington Electric Cooperative in its successful negotiation and development of a

landfill gas-fired generating plant in Coventry, Vermont. He is also providing legal assistance to the development of "New Generation Partners," a project of the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, to create an entity that will help Vermont's consumers, communities and utilities build new renewable generation projects.

Other board members include: Bob Walker, president, Jeff Wolfe (CEO of GroSolar) vice-president and Alan Berolzheimer (historian and editor) secretary/treasurer.