



## Montana Legislative Presentation

NCAT is a 35 year old, national, nonprofit organization, located in Butte. We were founded as a direct result of America's first energy crisis during the mid 70's. That was a time when this country faced the first oil embargo. Oil, which had been cheap and abundant and had fueled our country's rapid economic growth and affluent lifestyles, was unexpectedly scarce and expensive. Suddenly Americans were faced with energy shortages and long waiting lines for gasoline.

Energy leaders from around the country gathered together to determine how best to help poor communities through this energy crisis. The group decided there was a critical need for a new organization that would promote energy conservation, efficiencies, and renewable energy technologies and help people, small business and communities learn about and adopt these technologies.

Montana's Senator at the time was Senator Mike Mansfield. He was enlisted to help get this new organization off and running. He worked hard to obtain federal grant to provide planning money for the organization, his only requirement at the time was the new organization had to be located in Butte, MT.

## Who We Are

NCAT is a national nonprofit organization. We work in two main program areas: sustainable agriculture and sustainable energy. Our mission is to help people learn about and use sustainable technologies to grow crops, raise animals and use less energy.

We are a science-based organization and our employees are composed of agriculture and energy specialists, energy engineers, architects, technical writers, editors and educators. Our headquarters is in Butte but we also have offices in PA, CA, IA, AR, and TX.

In Montana our staff totals 62 – an unlike many businesses and other nonprofits, we have been growing our staff numbers with a 50% increase since the beginning of 2008. What made the difference?

### NCAT Regional Offices:

- P.O. Box 3657 ~ Fayetteville, AR 72702
- 53020 Hitchcock Ave. ~ Lewis, IA 51544
- P.O. Box 2218 ~ Davis, CA 95617
- 48 Church Road ~ Shavertown, PA 18708
- P.O. Box 1435 ~ Hammond, LA 70404

Many things, of course, but most significantly was NCAT's decision to develop a technical service program focused on helping energy customers invest in energy efficiency technologies. Over time, we increased our staff capacity to offer energy assessments, analysis and energy audits for schools, local, state and federal governments, small businesses, commercial building owners and irrigators in Montana.

We have done this type of service work intermittently over the years but in 2007, there were several things that signaled to us a need to beef up our technical expertise in the energy efficiency and conservation area:

- Increased numbers of federal and state tax credits being made available to for efficiency
- Increased number of utility rebate programs for energy consumers
- County and state officials addressing serious infrastructure needs while balancing high energy costs;
- Northwestern Energy, the state's largest utility, continues to promote energy efficiency
- Federal stimulus dollars being made available for energy efficiency projects
- Growing national concern about our continuing dependence on foreign sources of oil, national security issues, climate change issues, gas costs of \$4.00/gal.

Since 2008, NCAT has slowly grown our energy services program from initial 4 staff engineers to a staff of 18 energy analysts, engineers, building specialists and marketing specialists dedicated to helping Montana's small businesses, institutions and government reduce their energy consumption.

- NCAT has worked with hundreds of property owners and operators, architects, engineers, equipment vendors, state and local government officials, and others to help develop over 600 commercial and industrial energy conservation projects.
- Many of these projects are already providing significant energy savings. When these projects are completed, the total energy savings associated with their implementation will be 36,000 MW hours/per year.
- The environmental benefit associated with this level of energy savings is approximately equivalent to avoiding the combustion of 150 railcars of coal per year.

- The dollars spent on these projects stimulate local economies in Montana by supporting local technical and construction firms. NCAT estimates that this spending has supported the creation or continuation of hundreds of jobs in Montana.
- The cost of acquiring this energy resource is the cheapest source of energy there is and these energy efficiency projects are providing exceptional returns for energy customers- relatively short paybacks, increased property values, lower operating costs, and higher worker productivity.

NCAT's has also seen job growth in our sustainable agriculture work during these last three years. We are proud to have offered opportunities for professional, well paying positions to new graduates and to professionals who had been "downsized" in other businesses.

Thirty percent of our new hires in the last three years have been over 50 years of age - many of whom were back in the job market after being laid off or underemployed in other areas. Twenty-five percent are young people just starting their professional careers. These are young Montanans who are able to remain in Montana, starting families, and contributing to our communities.

In addition to our regular staff, NCAT hired fifteen Americorps members who have joined our Montana Energy Corps program for a year to work in communities across the state promoting energy efficiency, conservation, and energy planning. These members, mostly young people, are learning new skills that will help them obtain regular employment after their year of service to Montana communities. Forty percent of our Energy Corps members from last year were hired by the organizations where they served.

### **How can our state legislature help us to keep creating new sustainable jobs here in Montana?**

- First, I would urge you to continue to support our fine University system and most especially support programs that provide science and engineering technical skills. Many of our employees are graduates of Montana State University, the University of Montana and Montana Tech. These graduates have great skills and have a contributed greatly to NCAT's success
- Encourage you to continue to provide support to energy efficiency investments in public facilities such as government buildings, schools, and other taxpayer funded systems and processes. Cost effective investments in these facilities contribute to lowering the operating costs of these facilities, thereby reducing the tax burden for Montana citizens. These improvements also contribute to

improved learning environments for students, and hopefully more efficient and productive government workers.

- This legislature should continue and expand tax credits for the installation of energy efficiency improvements in homes and businesses.
- Montana is now a leader in the adoption of energy efficient building codes. NCAT believes that this is very good news for the developers and occupants of new residential and commercial buildings in Montana. These codes will help secure cost-effective energy savings when it is most effective – during construction. Unfortunately, these benefits are at risk if the state doesn't deal realistically with improving code enforcement.
- Support policies and programs that improve the sustainability of Montana's agricultural sector through energy efficiency improvements, value-added opportunities and farm to school and local food programs.
- Please continue to support assistance for Montana's low income citizens by supporting weatherization, energy education, and financial assistance.

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