THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Proposed Project:

Increasing Energy Efficiency Literacy Amongst RI Decision-Makers Through Educational Outreach Events

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ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension (URI CoopExt) provides a window to the land grant university system through which stakeholders are able to access factual, science-based information that addresses environmental, economic and social issues. URI CoopExt has a long history of supporting land stewardship, water resources, healthy lifestyles, and agriculture and food systems through the dissemination of juried scientific information. To empower individuals and community leaders as informed decision makers and advocates with respect to energy, URI CoopExt formed an energy literacy team in 2014 comprised of faculty, staff and undergraduate Energy Fellows. The team seeks to extend science-based resources related to energy consumption, management and production to encourage economic development while improving environmental quality and protecting natural resources.

This proposal outlines outreach and education activities that will be developed and implemented in 2020 on behalf of the RI Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council to shore up its efforts to serve Rhode Islanders in their homes and businesses. Activities will be marketed broadly to engage Rhode Islanders with homes and businesses in the state, ensuring that a higher percentage of utility customers understand the importance of providing input to the energy policy making process through the EERMC, and engage accordingly.

RELEVANT EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

PUBLIC FORUM

On October 29, 2019, URI Cooperative Extension assisted the EERMC in hosting its annual public forum at Ironworks Tavern in Warwick, RI. Titled *Building Rhode Island's Workforce with Energy Efficiency Programs*, the event saw over 70 industry professionals and decision-makers come together for a keynote address from Carolyn Sarno of the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships, followed by two panels, each with three speakers and a moderator. The first panel, "Jobs in Energy Efficiency", featured representatives from the BW Research Partnership, Building Future RI and the RI Department of Labor and Training. The second panel, "Industry Innovation", featured industry leaders representing Viessman, Stephen Turner, Inc., and the Oil Heat Institute discussing the role of businesses in training new and incumbent workers in light of new policies and incentives that are changing the face of the energy landscape. The forum closed a question and session and networking followed immediately after the program.

Through this agreement, URI Cooperative Extension proposes to plan, develop, coordinate and market the 2020 EERMC public forum. Scheduling for the forum will align with the RI legislative session, if appropriate. The event will elevate the profile and work of the EERMC with RI legislators and other key decision-makers through personal invitations, and also serve as a platform to encourage stakeholder participation in the development of RI's Energy Efficiency Plan.

We propose to complete the following tasks in support of the public forum:

- ➔ Review 2019 forum evaluations to identify necessary improvements in 2020;
- ➔ Work with the EERMC communications subgroup to identify a theme for the forum, and a related keynote speaker and panelists;
- ➔ Work with presenters to refine their content ensure applicability to the target audiences pre-identified through the planning process;
- ➔ Manage all aspects of venue procurement, including quote acquisition, coordination with venue, etc.
- ➔ Manage all aspects of marketing and communications for the public forum, including but not limited to webpage development and updates, social media management, press release and media advisory development, digital calendar postings, eblast newsletter releases, etc.
- ➔ Conduct an evaluation of the public forum's content and impact; share the results with the EERMC communications subgroup.

We request the following in support of the public forum-related tasks listed above:

➔ Planning, development and logistical coordination	$3,000.00
◆ 0.6 FTE URI Research Associate II salary & fringe * 2pps	
➔ Venue rental, refreshments, audio visual equipment rental	$1,500.00
➔ Speaker fees and travel expenses	$1,000.00
➔ Printing and supplies, marketing and communications	$500.00
➔ Indirect costs @ 25% state agency rate	$1,500.00
TOTAL:	**$7,500.00**

PLUGGED INTO ENERGY RESEARCH LECTURE SERIES

In response to a need to highlight ongoing academic energy research at URI and provide stakeholders with research-based updates on important energy topics, the *Plugged into URI Energy Research (PIER)* lecture series was developed and hosted at URI in 2015, 2016, 2017 and again in 2019. The series' consist of curated lectures featuring faculty from URI and other academic institutions, industry and nonprofit professionals, policymakers and students. Each lecture offered through the *PIER* lecture series is developed through careful examination of stakeholder input on topics of interest identified in previous lectures, or through personal interviews with key informants, and an inventory of existing energy-related URI faculty and staff research and outreach projects and their relevance to current state and local-level energy policy initiatives. Past series themes and associated lectures are listed in Appendix A for reference. The table below lists attendees for each lecture, each year, an average of ~59 attendees per lecture. Informal audience affiliation polls have consistently indicated that members of the general public, business owners, industry and nonprofit professionals, URI faculty, staff and students, and academics from other institutions are in attendance at the lectures. All attendees were encouraged to complete written evaluations following the lectures, the data from which assisted the Energy Literacy Team in measuring the effectiveness of the content, and identifying how improvements might yield increased comprehension amongst attendees.

Table 1: Plugged into Energy Research lecture series attendance									
YEAR	**2015**			**2016**			**2017**	**2019**	
LECTURE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
TOTAL ATTENDEES	**30**	**40**	**30**	**75**	**60**	**65**	**100**	**60**	**70**

Through this agreement, URI Cooperative Extension proposes to curate a three-night lecture series in 2020 at a free-of-charge, centrally-located venue such as URI's Providence Campus or CCRI's Warwick Campus to encourage higher attendance. The location will be confirmed with the EERMC communications subgroup in advance of confirmation. The lectures will be curated based on a theme(s) identified in cooperation with the EERMC with the expectation that strong guidance on both theme development and speaker procurement will be provided by the EERMC's communications subgroup. To ensure that the lecture topics are accessible to a lay audience and grounded in real-world applications, URI CoopExt, in cooperation with the EERMC's communication subgroup, proposes to:

- ➔ Review feedback collected through prior lecture evaluations for relevant topics of interest to past attendees; and
- ➔ Design and distribute a survey to our CoopExt stakeholder database to validate topics identified through the bullet above, and to identify additional topics of import to the general public.

The 2020 lecture series will serve as the EERMC's premier communications tool to the general public, while also providing a platform for URI CoopExt to disseminate juried, science-based energy efficiency information to a vertically-integrated audience that includes homeowners, business owners, energy managers, policymakers, and others to be determined. Building on the lessons learned from the 2019 series, special attention will be paid to ensure that the content of the lectures are relevant and comprehensible to individuals at all knowledge levels.

We propose to complete the following tasks in support of the lecture series:

- ➔ Review 2019 lecture evaluations to identify necessary improvements in 2020;
- ➔ Release "Call for Proposals" to identify speakers for each lecture night including outreach to colleges, universities and various organizations working in and around energy efficiency;
- ➔ Synthesize proposals received for review and approval by the EERMC communication subgroup;
- ➔ Work with presenters to refine the content of each talk and ensure its applicability to the target audience pre-identified through the planning process;
- ➔ Manage all aspects of marketing and communications for the lecture series, including but not limited to webpage development and updates, social media management, press release and media advisory development, digital calendar postings and eblast newsletter releases; and
- ➔ Conduct an evaluation of each lecture's content, delivery and organization; share the results with the EERMC communications subgroup.

We request the following in support of the lecture series-related tasks listed above:

➔ Planning, development and logistical coordination:	$8,000.00
0.6 FTE URI Research Associate II salary & fringe * 5pps	
➔ Printing and supplies, marketing and communications:	$1,000.00
➔ Refreshments @ $500/night for coffee, tea and light fare	$1,000.00
➔ Indirect Costs @ 25% state agency rate:	$2,500.00
TOTAL:	**$12,500.00**

Total Request (Public Forum + Lecture Series) to EERMC: $20,000.00*

*This funding request exceeds our 2019 request by $5,000. In reflecting upon the successes and challenges associated with our 2019 agreement with the EERMC, we observed the following and increased the funding proposal ask accordingly:

1) We engaged internal student interns to ensure that all tasks related to our 2019 agreement were completed and met the high standard we set out to achieve for this project, as the volume of work exceeded our staff's bandwidth. In anticipation of this 2020 proposal and its demands on CoopExt staff, we've increased the budget for coordination to an amount that accurately reflects the time spent meeting our 2019 goals for this project.
2) We were able to negotiate with the 2019 public forum venue, Ironworks Tavern, to secure the location at an introductory rate that met our needs and was within our budget, but which we don't expect to be offered again. Additionally, it was clear after our 2019 event that professional audio visual equipment is needed during the event, which will be a new cost incurred in 2020. Thus, the budget for the rentals must be increased.

APPENDIX A: URI Plugged into Energy Research lecture series

Year	Theme	Lecture Topics / Speaker / Affiliation
2015	Energy and Transportation	*Moving Towards Energy Efficiency in Transportation* Dr. Simona Trandafir, URI Department of Environmental and Natural Resource Economics
		Encouraging Walking, Biking and Intermodal Transportation on Campus Dr. Norbert Mundorf, URI Harrington School of Communication & Media
		Streetlights: Efficiency and Transportation Safety Dr. Valerie Maier- Speredelozzi, URI Department of Mechanical, Industrial & Systems Engineering
	Energy and the Ocean	*Understanding Public Support for the Block Island Wind Farm* Dr. David Bidwell, URI Department of Marine Affairs
		Natural Hazard Resilience of Ports: Securing our Energy Future Eric Kretsch, URI Department of Marine Affairs
		An Overview of Ocean Renewable Energy Dr. Reza Hashemi, URI Department of Ocean Engineering
	Energy and URI Cooperative Extension	*Using Energy Extension as a Tool to Save our Cities Thousands* Kristina DiSanto, URI Cooperative Extension
		Ocean State Clean Cities Coalition: Promoting Alternative Fuels for Transportation Fleets Wendy Lucht, URI Cooperative Extension
		Energy Curriculum and Fellowships at URI Angela Tuoni, 2014 URI Energy Fellow
2016	The Winds of Change: Ocean Energy Generation in Rhode Island	*The State of RI's Role in Advancing Offshore Wind* Chris Kearns, RI Office of Energy Resources
		Ocean Wind Energy Research for Offshore Wind Farm Siting Dr. Malcolm Spauding, URI Department of Ocean Engineering
		Our Nation's First Offshore Wind Farm: Planning to Operations Captain John O'Keeffe, Deepwater Wind
		Media Coverage of Energy Technology in New England Dr. Hollie Smith, URI Harrington School of Communication & Media
	RI's Push for Energy Efficiency: Lead by Example	*We're #1! Why Rhode Island is Leading the Country on Energy Efficiency* Rachel Sholly, RI Office of Energy Resources
		Helping Rhode Island Cities and Towns Manage Energy Use Carrie Gill, URI Department of Environmental and Natural Resource Economics
		MPG for My House? RI's Efforts to Market Building Energy Performance Becca Trietch, RI Office of Energy Resources
	Got Gas? Energy Generation in the Northeast	*Creating a Low Carbon Future and Keeping the Lights On: New England's Energy Generation Challenge* Ron Gerwatowski, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asst. Secretary of Energy
		The Local Impacts of the Oil and Gas Boom Dr. Andy Boslett, University of Rochester
		Taking the Waste out of Wastewater Dr. Vinka Oyanedel- Craver, URI Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
2017	Rhode Island Renewables	*An Update on Year One of Block Island Wind Farm Operations* Captain John O'Keeffe, Deepwater Wind
		Renewable Energy Economics and Policy Chris Kearns, RI Office of Energy Resources
		Batteries for Renewable Energy Storage

		Dr. Brett Lucht, URI Department of Chemistry
2019	Modernizing Energy Management	*Sustainability in Manufacturing: Cutting-Edge Engineering Innovations Manufacturers Need to Know* Dr. Valerie Maier-Speredelozzi, URI Department of Industrial & Systems Engineering
		Real-time Energy Management for Data-Driven Operations Ron Gillooly, Leidos
		Modern Municipal Streetlights: How Intelligent Technologies are Saving RI Taxpayer Dollars Jeff Broadhead, Partnership for Rhode Island Streetlight Management
	Lower Bills for Everyone: The Role of Equity in EE	*From Theory to Practice: Applying Theoretical Frameworks to Implement Real Solutions to RI's Energy Equity Challenges* Yasmin Yacoby, RI Office of Energy Resources
		Cutting Carbon While We Work to Electrify Heat Marty Davey, New Ecology
		Financing, Equity and Climate Change in Rhode Island's Energy Efficiency Marketplace Sam Ross, Consultant, Optimal Energy