



Smart Energy 'Udder' Success at Three-Year Mark

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Customer program successfully supporting regional biogas projects

PORTLAND, Ore.—In 2007, NW Natural became the first gas-only utility in the nation to launch a carbon offset pilot project. Today, three years into the pilot, NW Natural is marking the milestone by celebrating its customers commitment to Smart Energy – and offsetting an additional 120 pounds of carbon per program customer.

“We couldn’t be more pleased with the number of customers voluntarily signing up to offset their natural gas use,” said Bill Edmonds, director of environmental management and sustainability for NW Natural. “Their commitment to ‘use less, offset the rest’ has lowered their energy use and reduced their carbon footprints in a very real way. We thank them for championing the cause for a more sustainable future.”

By the numbers

The five-year pilot has continued to add participants, despite tough economic conditions. Specifically:

About 11,000 customers are enrolled in Smart Energy;

74,000 tons of carbon have been offset;

It’s equivalent to removing about 13,000 cars off the road.

What’s with the cow?

Funds go toward offsetting customers’ natural gas use through high-quality carbon offsets. A portion of those funds are reinvested projects around our region, such as biodigesters, which capture methane emitted from cow waste and turns it into an on-demand renewable energy source: biogas.

Biogas, explained

Biogas is created when manure is placed in a machine called a ‘biodigester’, designed to capture methane gas released by decomposing material. When properly treated, biogas can be used to generate electricity or eventually be added to a pipeline system and used in homes and businesses. Currently, biogas can be produced only in limited quantities, and NW Natural hopes that through Smart Energy, biogas can become a viable, renewable energy source for our region.

Smart Energy investments

Nearly 70 percent of all Smart Energy contributions are utilized by The Climate Trust to fund offset projects including: project identification, development, monitoring, and operational support. The remaining 30 percent is used for program administration and to educate customers about Smart Energy and climate change.

About NW Natural

Northwest Natural Gas Company dba NW Natural (NYSE:NWN) is headquartered in Portland, Ore., and serves approximately 670,000 residential and business customers in Oregon and Southwest Washington. It is the largest independent natural gas utility