

Building Up

Building your business on energy efficiency



A message from ...

the Power of One®
Energy Conservation Team

Heating and cooling technology changes constantly, and it is important for contractors to understand the mechanics and benefits of cutting-edge systems. Recent advances in air source heat pumps (ASHPs), for example, make them an energy-saving option for both air conditioning and winter heating, even in cold-climate regions like northern Minnesota.

Minnesota Power offers incentives to encourage quality installations of ASHPs, particularly cold-climate models (see Featured Incentives on next page). We recently sponsored training to educate heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) contractors about ASHP breakthroughs and opportunities. It was inspiring to see so many members of our participating HVAC contractor network attend.

Customers depend on contractors to provide accurate, up-to-date information that will help them make wise choices for comfort, durability and energy savings. Minnesota Power helps by hosting the annual Energy Design Conference & Expo, sponsoring technology-specific training and incentivizing quality installations. Take advantage of these resources and build your business on energy efficiency!

ASHPs are a Hot Commodity for Winter Heating

Autumn is a time when many homeowners and small business operators start to think about winter heating. Dozens of area HVAC contractors got a jump on the season September 11 when they gathered at Canal Park Lodge in Duluth for a presentation on air source heat pump (ASHP) technology and incentives. Another training was held in Nisswa at the Grand View Lodge the next day. These sessions, sponsored by Minnesota Power and presented by Mitsubishi Electric, educated participants about this rapidly evolving technology, which delivers energy-efficient heating and air conditioning through a single unit.

“We brought in a manufacturer to help contractors and members of our conservation improvement program (CIP) team better understand heat pump technology and the benefits to homeowners and small businesses,” said Chad Trebilcock, senior customer programs and services representative with Minnesota Power’s Power of One® conservation improvement program. “We also wanted to hear from contractors about when and where it makes sense to install ASHPs.”

Presenter Mark Knudsen, regional manager for Mitsubishi Electric, explained how heat pump technology is growing by leaps and bounds. He shared information and provided tools to assist contractors in explaining ASHP capacities and outputs, coefficient of performance at cold temperatures, operating costs compared to other heating sources and equipment options.

His colleague Kevin DeMaster, manager of utility programs for Mitsubishi Electric, presented third-party research on ASHP performance and insights into what motivates customers to choose this technology. He cited a recent study by the Center for Energy and the Environment that validated manufacturer claims of new generation cold-climate ASHPs operating



Presenter Mark Knudsen of Mitsubishi Electric explained capacities, outputs and other factors related to ASHPs.

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**Chad Trebilcock,
Minnesota Power**

efficiently at temperatures as low as -13° F. It found that when heat pump equipment is installed and operated with an appropriate backup system, it provides a cost-effective, energy-efficient space heating option even in Minnesota’s harsh winters.

“Many people don’t realize they can use this technology as an alternative source of heat and reduce their dependence on fossil-fuel burning boilers or furnaces,”

said Jason Rice, home comfort designer, Aire Serv, who attended the Duluth training with several colleagues. A growing percentage of Aire Serv's customers are choosing cold-climate mini-split ductless ASHPs for the bulk of their heating needs.

"Here in the Northland, less than 10 percent of our days are too cold for heat pumps to handle, and the backup heat kicks in on those days. As more people realize how comfortable these systems are along with the cost-saving and environmental benefits, they will only get more and more popular."



Members of Minnesota Power's CIP team were among participants at the Duluth training.



David Prachar and Chris Prachar of D & E Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration were eager to learn more about ASHP performance.

Aire Serv currently is partnering with Minnesota Power to gather ASHP performance data in the field. This research will improve knowledge of real-world energy and cost savings as well as performance in winter conditions.

"Minnesota Power is committed to not just promote this technology, but to understand it," Rice said. "They are interested to the point where they are putting data gathering and reporting equipment on some of the systems we install, which shows me they really want to know what works for people and whether there are actual savings."

Chris Prachar, co-owner of D & E Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration, also attended the Duluth session. He was looking for data on how well cold-climate ASHPs perform.

"When I tell a customer that installing one of these in their home will save money, I want to be able to back that up," Prachar said, "because when something doesn't work as promised, customers call me."

"If you are a contractor armed with information and can speak knowledgeably to customers, you're golden," said DeMaster, quoting market research about what motivates and influences customers to install heat pumps in their homes and businesses. "Decisions often are influenced by other customer ratings and reviews, utility company endorsements and the word of professional contractors."

Trebilcock agreed.

"Minnesota Power can provide rebate incentive structures to advance technologies like ASHPs, but contractors are the boots on the ground," he said. "Customers call contractors when they need a furnace or heat pump—not us—so we really appreciate them as partners and want to provide them with good information and effective tools."

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Featured Incentives

Here are a few of the valuable rebates available through our participating HVAC contractor network:

- ENERGY STAR-qualified, ducted air source heat pump (ASHP) \$300
- ASHP furnace integrated with electronically commutated motor (ECM) \$500
- ENERGY STAR cold-climate ASHP-ducted \$1,000
- New forced air furnace with ECM and ASHP \$600
- ASHP ductless (electricity must be the primary heating source) \$500
- ASHP ductless cold-climate (electricity must be the primary heating source) \$1,000

Rebates offered through December 31, 2018

Visit www.mnpower.com/Rebates for complete information on rebates and other energy-saving tools.

ENERGY DESIGN

conference & expo

CALL FOR PRESENTERS

Are you an expert in building science or high performance homes? Can you provide a unique perspective on energy-saving technologies or systems? If so, share your knowledge at the **Energy Design Conference & Expo, Feb. 26-27, 2019, in Duluth.** Organizers are accepting proposals through October 16. They are seeking presenters to lead sessions on technologies, efficient building concepts, sustainable development, and current energy and environmental topics related to the building industry. **Apply online at www.duluthenergydesign.com.** For questions or information, please contact Amanda Oja at 218-355-3162.

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