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Cash in on financial incentives for commercial upgrades

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Rebates. Energy grants. Stimulus funds. Financing options. Custom programs. Upgrade incentives. Never has the U.S. legislative and economic landscape been so favorable to commercial end users who pursue energy-efficient lighting and electrical product upgrades in their facilities and never have so many funding options been available to electricity customers. It's time to capitalize on your upgrade opportunities and benefit from the extensive new range of financial incentives available.

A Supportive Legislative Landscape

As a result of several sweeping pieces of national energy legislation - including the landmark 2005 Energy Policy Act and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), signed by President Obama in 2009 - energy efficiency has come into the forefront of the American consciousness and utility companies, state energy offices, and the federal government are offering more financial incentives on energy-efficient initiatives than ever before.

Confirms Leendert Enthoven, president of BriteSwitch LLC, a Princeton, N.J.-based company which specializes in securing and managing rebates, tax incentives, and other financial rewards (primarily in the lighting arena) for commercial properties anywhere in the U.S., "two years ago, in 2008, our tracking revealed that 36 states offered some level of funding for lighting upgrades, even if it was only in a small way. In 2010, however, our data shows that organizations in 47 states are now actively offering incentives for lighting upgrades -- a 31% growth in national participation -- and the programs themselves are far more rich, generous, and extensive."

While most utility rebate dollars and programs are currently associated with lighting because lighting upgrades are relatively easy to conduct and can deliver sizable savings quickly, other electrical technologies are making headway as well. Says Dave Hayward, Connecticut energy efficiency fund program administrator at Connecticut Light and Power, "we have solid lighting programs but also reward a broad range of other energy-efficient building envelope technologies, such as variable frequency drives, stack economizers, boilers, condensing units, chillers, wastewater treatment pumps, and LED cooler lights as well as process improvements." The utility also offers low or no-interest customer loans to encourage energy-efficient new construction and retrofit projects in addition to hosting educational programs and technology seminars.

Results of DSM:

The Proof is in the Pudding

According to the DOE's 2008 Electric Power Annual, the \$3.72 billion that utilities offered in energy-efficiency incentives and programs in 2008 delivered energy savings of over 86 million megawatthours, an amount that could power the entire states of Missouri or Washington. The same study projects that while electricity consumption in the U.S. residential, commercial, and industrial sectors will grow at an annual rate of 1.07% from 2008 through 2030, energy efficiency programs

have the potential to reduce this growth rate to as low as .68% per year from 2008 through 2030 under optimal conditions.

All on their own, energy-efficient lighting and electrical product upgrades represent some of the most attractive investments commercial buildings can make. And the current record-high availability of a broad range of financial incentives for energy-efficient initiatives further improves ROIs, reduces payback periods, and provides an even more compelling reason for end users to pursue an upgrade today. On top of the energy savings, system improvements, and environmental benefits that upgrades deliver, building owners, managers, and professionals are encouraged to investigate the financial opportunities offered by their local utilities and state energy offices so that they can enjoy the additional financial rewards recently made available to encourage green behavior!

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