

PowerGrant Profiles

July, 2005



Building Operator Certification (BOC) Comes to Minnesota

Blaine Peterson is a typical candidate for Building Operator Certification (BOC). As buildings and grounds terminal manager at the Duluth International Airport, he oversees 10 facilities, including hangars, terminals, equipment garages and rental properties. The job requires knowledge of complex building systems, awareness of emerging technologies and commitment to continuous improvement.



BOC, Building Operator Certification, provides competency-based training for operations and maintenance staff, an audience not well served with training opportunities.

Peterson was among the first to enroll when the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA), in cooperation with Minnesota Power and the Minnesota Department of Commerce, began offering BOC training in Minnesota in early 2005. Nationwide, more than 1,000 building operators have earned the certification since 1996.

"I wanted to learn more about how to run our buildings more efficiently and what types of programs were available to support that effort," Peterson said.

BOC is a professional development program for operations and maintenance staff who work in commercial, institutional or industrial buildings. Its primary goal is to encourage conservation in public facilities and commercial buildings by training individuals directly responsible for day-to-day operations in the latest energy-saving technologies.



Enrollees in Minnesota's first BOC training series toured Minnesota Power's Herbert Service Center, a showcase facility for energy efficient technologies.

Through a series of seven courses—eight full days of training—participants learn about building systems, energy conservation techniques, HVAC systems and controls, lighting, environmental health and safety regulations, indoor air quality and facility electrical systems. In addition to classroom training, they complete five projects at their own facilities, requiring them to apply the skills taught in the classroom.

"The training provides a good overview of all major systems of buildings," said Gary Olson, on-site coordinator for the BOC training and a Minnesota Power energy consultant. "It is geared to building operators and maintenance managers, the two groups most important in terms of operating buildings efficiently and in making the investments for energy improvements."

PowerGrant Contact Information

For more information, please call Minnesota Power's Conservation Improvement Program toll-free at 800-228-4966 ext.2909.

"Energizing Our Region" through Conservation Improvement

Minnesota Power's Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) works with local leaders, businesses, community groups, other energy providers and government entities to help customers reap the economic and environmental benefits of sustainable energy savings. Minnesota Power and its partners accomplish this through research, education, evaluation and direct impact initiatives.

Find out how you could get a PowerGrant

Minnesota Power awards grants to commercial/industrial customers who use innovative technologies, improve manufacturing processes, undertake renewable electric energy projects, or who need project design assistance. PowerGrant awards are available for a wide variety of projects employing diverse technologies.

Here are some examples of activities or products that could qualify for MP funding under the PowerGrant Program:

- New electro-technologies that lower energy costs per unit of production in a manufacturing process
- Innovative technologies that are new and underutilized in our regional marketplace
- Inclusion of energy-efficient options in the design phase of a project

Maximum annual grants are determined by a customer's average billing demand:

<i>Customer Demand</i>	<i>Maximum Rebate</i>
0 to 100 kW	\$10,000
101 to 300 kW	\$25,000
Over 300 kW	\$50,000

Customers may submit multiple grant requests.

Other MP Products and Services

In addition to PowerGrants, MP CIP offers commercial and industrial customers other energy efficiency products and services. These include energy audits, rebates, dual fuel, storage/off-peak services, outdoor and area lighting and economic development assistance.



Incentives help Minnesota Power customers recover BOC tuition costs...

"Minnesota Power took the lead in bringing BOC to Minnesota," said Peggy Reins, BOC program manager, MEEA. The utility worked with MEEA and the Minnesota Department of Commerce to build a pool of qualified instructors and developed an incentive program to encourage its customers to enroll. Incentives for earning the certification, identifying a potential conservation project and submitting a PowerGrant application help participants recover up to the full cost of tuition. "Clearly, Minnesota Power understood that BOC-trained building operators would be likely to support other energy efficiency projects, and they seized upon it," Reins added.

National evaluations have found that 90 per cent of

certified building operators have applied concepts or used methods taught in the BOC training. In Minnesota, enrollees say BOC training is providing valuable information on preventive maintenance, tips for recording and reviewing energy data, and guidance to effectively and economically perform lighting retrofits and upgrades—as well as invaluable networking.

"Building Operator Certification training will assist our customers in making wise energy decisions and increase their viability in the economic market," said Tim Gallagher, program manager for Minnesota Power's Conservation Improvement Program. "We hope to continue supporting this important educational program."

(Top) BOC training benefits all building operators and maintenance personnel, whether they oversee single or multiple facilities.

(Bottom) Lighting control strategies are among topics covered in BOC training.