



Energy efficiency conferences in Pest County Pest County SAVE-REMA Energy Agency, Hungary

Summary

The Pest County SAVE-REMA Energy Agency in 2005 and 2006 organized a series of conferences for municipalities on energy efficiency and renewable energies. The conferences were held in the County Hall of Pest and each included 5-8 lectures. Each conference was attended by 50-70 people, typically majors of small villages and staff of the technical departments of self-governments of towns. The topics included technical, financial and organizational aspects of energy efficiency and applications of renewable energies. The conferences were highly successful, since many new links were established after the conferences. The conferences were co-funded by the Energy Centre of Hungary.

End-user area	Target Audience	Technical
New buildings	Citizens	Energy efficiency
Refurbishment of buildings	Households	Heating
Transport and mobility	Property owners	Cooling
Financial instruments	Schools and universities	Appliances
Industry	Decision makers	Lighting
Legal initiatives (regulations, directives, etc)	Local and regional authorities	CHP
Planning issues	Transport companies	District Heating
Sustainable communities	Utilities	Solar energy
User behaviour	ESCOs	Biomass
Education	Architects and engineers	Wind
Other	Financial institutions	Geothermal
	Other	Hydro power
		Other

Context

In Hungary, the domestic and community heating is primarily based on natural gas. Until now, gas was relatively inexpensive, which resulted in a low interest in energy savings and renewable energies. In the last years, gas became expensive for municipalities and energy costs became one of the major expenses for them. Therefore, all municipalities targeted the decrease of energy costs and the application of renewable energies. However, they usually lacked the necessary information and therefore lectures providing them practical information were received with great interest.

Objectives

The aim was to provide well applicable, practical information for elected representatives of self-governments and staff of municipal offices. This information included technical, financial and organizational aspects of energy efficiency and applications of renewable energies. The main intention was that all information would be immediately applicable.

Process

A series of five conferences were organized. Three conferences were held in 2005 (dated 15th February, 12th April, and 1st June), in the Conference Room of the County Hall of Pest (1052 Budapest, Városház u. 7). Two



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other conferences were organized in 2006 (26th September and 22nd November) and both conferences were held in the Ceremonial Room of the County Hall of Pest.

In each time, 430 invitation letters were sent out to all self-governments in Pest County, the offices of the micro-regions of Pest County, to the majors of all towns having more than 50,000 inhabitants in Hungary, to the majors of all districts in Budapest and to the leaders of all counties of Hungary. Having received the replies, the contact data of the participants were recorded in a database.

The lectures were given by experts of each field, who were able to give addresses of contact people in each topic. The lecturers included the staff of the SAVE-REMA Energy Agency; co-workers the Energy Centre, Hungary; and the representatives of various small enterprises, who offer services in energy efficiency and renewable energies. The topics included: (1) energy efficiency in community buildings: usual problems and hints for the improvement of the operation; (2) the role of energy audits in improving the energy efficiency; (3) buying electricity and gas on the free market; (4) financial solutions for funding energy efficiency and renewable energy projects; (5) current related grant schemes in Hungary; (6) energy efficiency and green roofs; (7) applications of renewable energies in municipal level: solar thermal energy, solar electricity production, wind energy, biogas production, heat pumps; (8) applications of energy grass: aspects related to agricultural production, employment of farmers, financial requirements and gains, utilization in furnaces for heating in green houses and community buildings; (9) organizational solutions for the improvement of energy efficiency in municipalities.

The lectures were followed by discussions, where the staff of municipalities described their own previous experiences in the topics of the lecture and the lecturers answered the questions.

The program of each conference (in Hungarian) and photos taken at the conferences can be found in the SAVE-REMA Web site www.save-rema.hu (see -> szolgáltatások (services) -> energiahatékonysági tanácsadás (energy efficiency information services)). After the conferences, the SAVE-REMA Energy Agency received the PowerPoint files of the lecturers and these files were forwarded to participants in e-mail or as downloadable files from our Web site.



2nd SAVE-REMA Conference (12 April, 2005), in the Conference Room of the Pest County Hall



4th SAVE-REMA Conference (26 September, 2006) in the Ceremonial Room of the Pest County Hall



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5th SAVE-REMA Conference (22 November, 2006) in the Ceremonial Room of the Pest County Hall



5th SAVE-REMA Conference (22 November, 2006) in the Ceremonial Room of the Pest County Hall

Financial resources and partners

The conferences were organized using the budget of the SAVE-REMA Energy Agency. In each occasion, the Self-government of Pest County allowed free-of-charge usage of the Ceremonial Room or the Conference Room, and provided technical staff and equipment. This meant an in-kind contribution of 127 kHUF (500 euro) for room rental and 30 kHUF (120 euro) for the rent of the equipment. Based on a contract between the UNDP/GEF group of the Energy Centre, Hungary (www.undp.hu) and the SAVE-REMA Energy Agency, the Energy Centre contributed to the organization by 150 kHUF (600 euro) and covered the costs of the courtesy buffet (also about 150 kHUF (600 euro)). The lecturers contributed free-of-charge and the attendance was also free for the participants.

Results

Each conference was attended by 50-70 people, typically majors of small villages and staff of the technical departments of self-governments of larger villages and towns. During the breaks and after the end of the conferences the participants asked the lecturers for further details and contact data. Usually the participants described their special problems and asked for advice. The SAVE-REMA Energy Agency also received a dozen phone-calls after each conference; the participants asked further details and contact data of various related firms. It is very likely that many links were established as a consequence of these conferences.

The „netNEWS TV” is a community service Web television. They appeared on the 2nd SAVE-REMA Conference (12th April, 2005), made shootings at the conference and interviews with the lecturers. The “Másik Rádió” (Another Radio) of town Gödöllő (Pest County) is a regional radio that covers northeast Pest County with about 500,000 potential listeners. This radio reported about the 3rd SAVE-REMA Conference (1st July, 2005), and also made interviews with the lecturers about their topics. The interviews were aired on 8th June.



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These programs called the attention of a wider audience for the importance of energy efficiency and the applications of renewable energies.

Lessons learned and repeatability

High energy costs are a soaring problem for municipalities. The municipalities are ready to do energy efficiency measures and apply renewable energies, but sometimes the initial piece of information is missing. Conferences like these can help them very much. At the same time, these conferences were also marketing opportunities for small and medium enterprises for the promotion of their services in the fields of energy savings, renewable energies and environmental protection. Very positive feed-back was received after the conferences from both the participants and the lecturers.

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