



# **CONNECTIONS SUMMIT**

◆ **ELECTRICITIES**

## **Navigating Rising Costs: Tools for Effective Conversations**

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# Dale Odom Electricities' Retail Energy Services Manager

◆ ELECTRICITIES

| CONNECTIONS ▲ SUMMIT 2025

# Energy Costs are Rising



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- The utility industry—and our world in general—is experiencing significant pressures outside of our control.
- We're seeing some of these pressures—like **inflation and supply chain constraints**—increase costs for products and services we use every day, everything from rent and groceries to gas and medications. Electricity is no different.
- Through **state and federal regulations**, the utility industry is being forced to transition quickly to carbon free energy sources. This transition is expensive.
- **Cost increases are not unique to our community or to public power.** Communities and customers across the country are grappling with similar cost pressures. [According to J.D. Power, average utility prices have risen 27% since 2021.](#)

# Best Practices & Additional Resources

- **Educate your internal staff on your messaging:** Before communicating messages to your customers and external audiences more broadly, educate your internal team on the specifics and make sure they are comfortable and prepared to help deliver your messages.
- **Keep the message simple:** Simple messages are easier to remember. Simplify your message using uncomplicated, consistent language.
- **Visit the [Value of Public Power dashboard](#)** to access additional resources to help you communicate the value of public power in your local community.
- **If you've done a recent Retail Customer Survey,** reference your results for the best ways to communicate with your local customers based on their communication preferences.
- **If you've done a recent Economic Benefit Study,** highlight the numerical value your utility provides your community on your communication channels.



# Residential Energy Audits

Walk through energy audits, visually inspecting for energy saving opportunities.

A written report is provided detailing recommendations to reduce energy usage.



▶ The supply connection from when the home had the HVAC ductwork in the crawlspace have not been sealed. The conditioned floor area has been increased as a result of the holes not being sealed.



# Home Energy Audit – Efficiency & Ducts



Disconnected supply duct



Unsealed collar connection



# You Just Never Know...

Each “pig bed” was warmed by a 1500-watt space heater!



# Commercial/Industrial Energy Audit Discoveries



**Meter review** - Discovery that two customers side by side were receiving the others bill.



**Billing review** - Single energy audit uncovered that a large group of commercial customers were being billed peak demands equal to their multiplier, not what their actual peak demand was.



**Facility review** - A few other examples of heat strips being stuck on, but not because the customer had the unit set to emergency heat. One example was a failure of the HVAC systems control board, another example was that the unit was incorrectly wired in by the electrician at time of install.



**Rate review** - Customers being eligible for another rate the city/town offers that could save the customers thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars.



# Customer Service Support & Training

- Best Practices
- Conflict Resolution
- Electric Utility Math
- Critical Thinking
- Policy foundation
- Energy Efficiency Education
- Certification

Customer Service 101

Customer Service 102

Customer Service 201

Customer Service 100

# Key Accounts Support & Training

Program Development

Account Identification

Value Assessment

Energy Efficiency

- Program development (Agency members)
- Account identification (Agency members)
- Networking opportunities (Agency members)
- Energy audits (mix of free and cost-based)



# TempTracker 365

TempTracker 365™ - ElectriCities

**Cherryville**  
**DECEMBER 2024**

**Energy Efficiency Tip**  
If you have good weather stripping and still can see light around your exterior door, try adjusting your strikeplate so the door compresses the weather stripping for a tighter seal.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 48° 28°	2 43° 29°	3 38° 24°	4 46° 23°	5 52° 27°	6 36° 22°	7 46° 22°
8 61° 33°	9 55° 46°	10 69° 50°	11 59° 35°	12 47° 27°	13 52° 28°	14 46° 33°
15 40° 34°	16 56° 39°	17 63° 48°	18 67° 51°	19 52° 43°	20 54° 36°	21 42° 30°
22 36° 24°	23 38° 23°	24 50° 24°	25 50° 31°	26 48° 33°	27 43° 39°	28 50° 40°
29 61° 48°	30 60° 40°	31 62° 41°				

**Cold Weather Temperature Scale**

Average High: 51  
Average Low: 34

Powered By ElectriCities  
**TempTracker 365**

[PRINT CALENDAR](#)

For best results in printing, we recommend using the **Google Chrome** web browser with page orientation set to "Landscape".

# Energy Kits

- Annual allotment for agency members
- Extra kits available for a fee





# Bill Inserts

## Bill Inserts Request Form

The screenshot shows the website for Electricities of North Carolina, Inc. The top navigation bar includes a registration notice for the Connections Summit 2025 and a "Register Today!" button. The main navigation menu lists "ABOUT US", "PUBLIC POWER", "SERVICES" (highlighted), "RESOURCES", and "NEWS & EVENTS". A search bar is located in the top right. The breadcrumb trail reads "Home > Services > Corporate Communications > Bill Inserts Request Form". The main heading is "BILL INSERTS REQUEST FORM". Below this, there is a section titled "COMMUNICATING TO YOUR CUSTOMERS" with a document icon. The text explains that bill inserts are used to communicate important information to customers and that general inserts are available for common topics. It provides a link to view or download PDF versions of the inserts. To the right, there are images of several bill insert cards: one for "ANALOG KNOW YOUR METER DIGIT", one for "SAVE ENERGY SAVE MONEY Residential Load Management Program", and one for "HURACÁN" (Hurricane) with Spanish instructions.

# Phil's 2-Minute Drills

- [Phil's 2-Minute Drills – ElectriCities](#)
- Numerous energy efficiency tips
- Helpful for customer service staff





# Energy Education Support

- Staff lunch–n-learn
- Town Hall informational events
- Community events

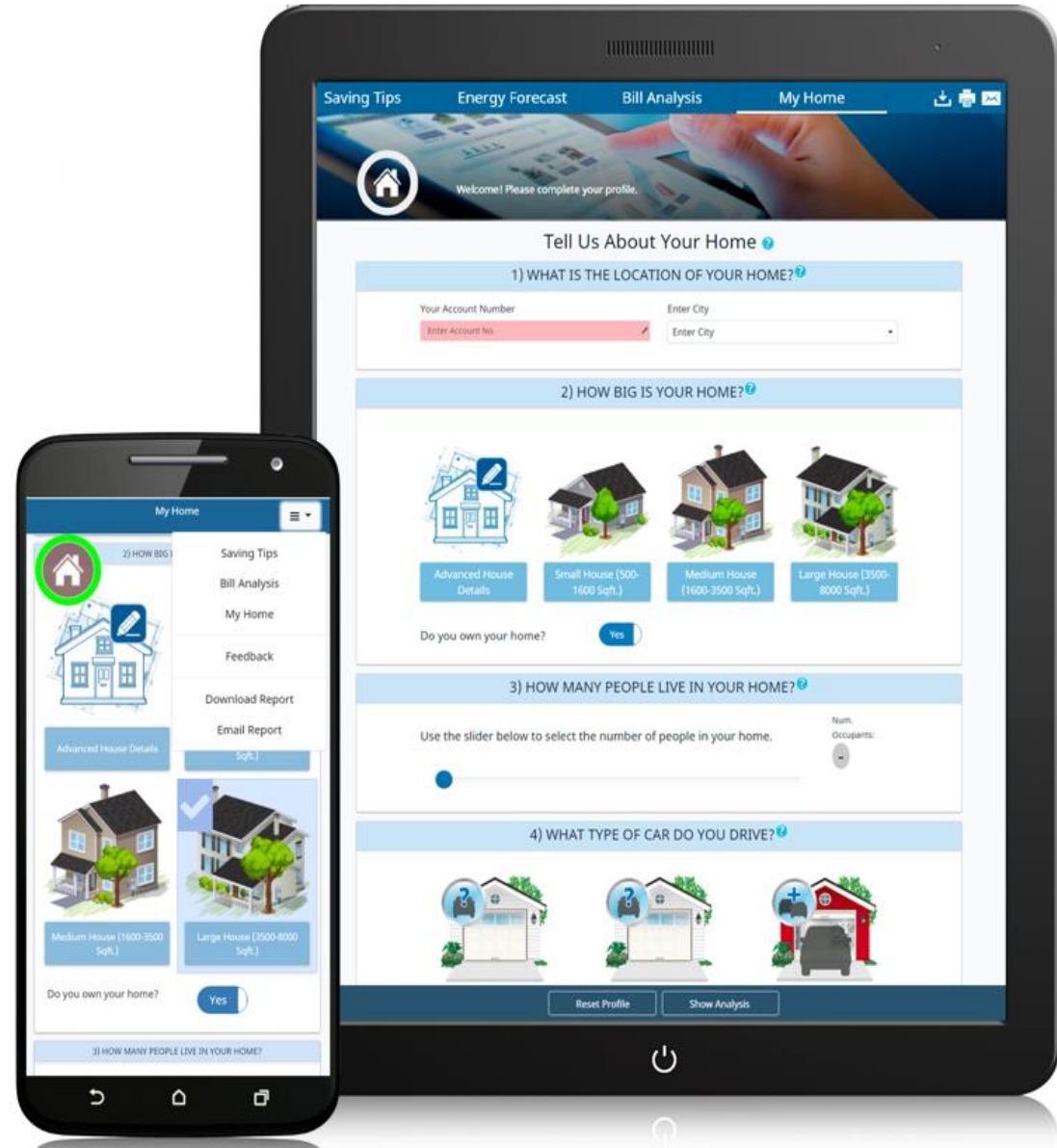


# Home Energy Advisor

The Energy Advisor tool works in conjunction with the Energy Forecast tool.

When a customer clicks on the Energy Forecast widget or a link on your website, they can also choose to perform a simple home energy audit.

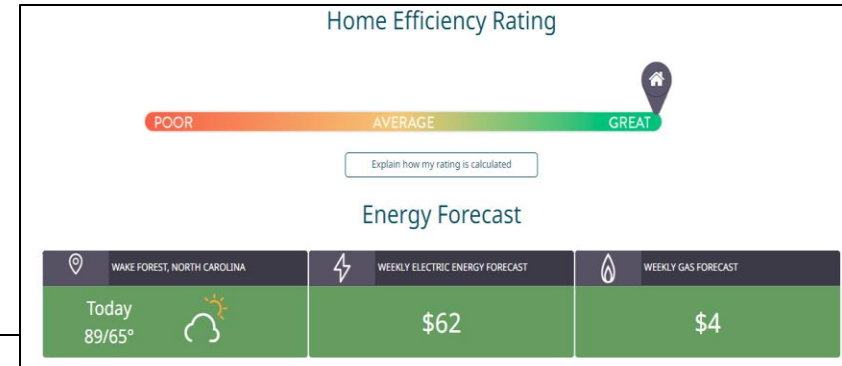
As viewed on tablet or mobile device





# Home Energy Advisor

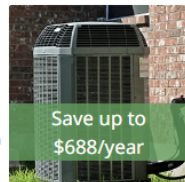
Based on the results from their energy audit, your customers receive an efficiency rating and savings tips!



## Your Ways to Save

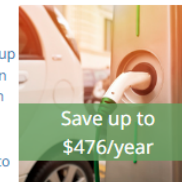
### Upgrade Your Heating System

If you are replacing your heating system, choose an ENERGY STAR® high efficiency model in order to save year after year on your energy bills. This upgrade may save you up to \$688 a year on heating costs, which are your single largest energy expense during the winter. Now is also a great time to assess the overall performance of your home. It is possible that by sealing air leaks, adding insulation and other measures you can achieve greater comfort and reduce the size of your replacement heating system.



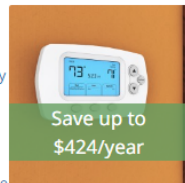
### Check Out Electric Vehicles

Switching just one of your cars to an electric vehicle can give you a net savings of up to \$476 a year compared to what you are spending on gasoline. A typical American family spends 20% of their total annual budget on transportation, making a switch from a gas or diesel vehicle to a plug-in electric vehicle (EV) a smart choice for fuel savings. Electricity is less expensive per mile driven, and charging options at work and on the road are expanding rapidly. In addition, some locales allow EV drivers to use the High Occupancy Vehicle lane even when driving solo, speeding up your commute (check local laws).



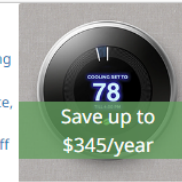
### Save With A Smart Thermostat

Automate your savings with a Smart thermostat and save up to \$424 per year by holding 68°F for heating and 78°F for cooling when you are home and automatically setting to 55°F for heating and 85°F for cooling when you are away. Smart thermostats use advanced technology and user programming to automatically adjust temperature settings to keep you comfortable and save on heating and cooling costs. Make sure to maximize savings by increasing cooling and decreasing heating setpoints when you are away for more than an hour, as well as adjusting the heat to a lower temperature at night.



### Save on Cooling

Your thermostat gives you control of your energy savings. By adjusting your setting to 78°F could save you as much as \$345 per year. Try to incorporate additional actions to improve comfort as you find the setting that is right for you. For instance, closing drapes or blinds on sunny days will keep the sun from heating the room, and using a ceiling fan will cool people in a room. Just remember to turn the fan off when the room is unoccupied.



### Air Conditioner Replacement-Home Improvement Expert Factsheet

Maintaining or replacing your window or room air conditioner will save money on electricity and improve comfort.

# Home Energy Advisor Usage

2023 Page Views = 1419

2024 Page Views = 1675

15% increase

2023 →

City	Usage
Benson	5
Boone	114
Cherryville	60
Concord	178
Fayetteville	70
Gastonia	27
High Point	509
Huntersville	8
Kinston	50
Monroe	113
New Bern	14
Newton	113
Rocky Mount	14
Selma	8
Shelby	4
Statesville	127
Tarboro	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1419</b>

← 2024

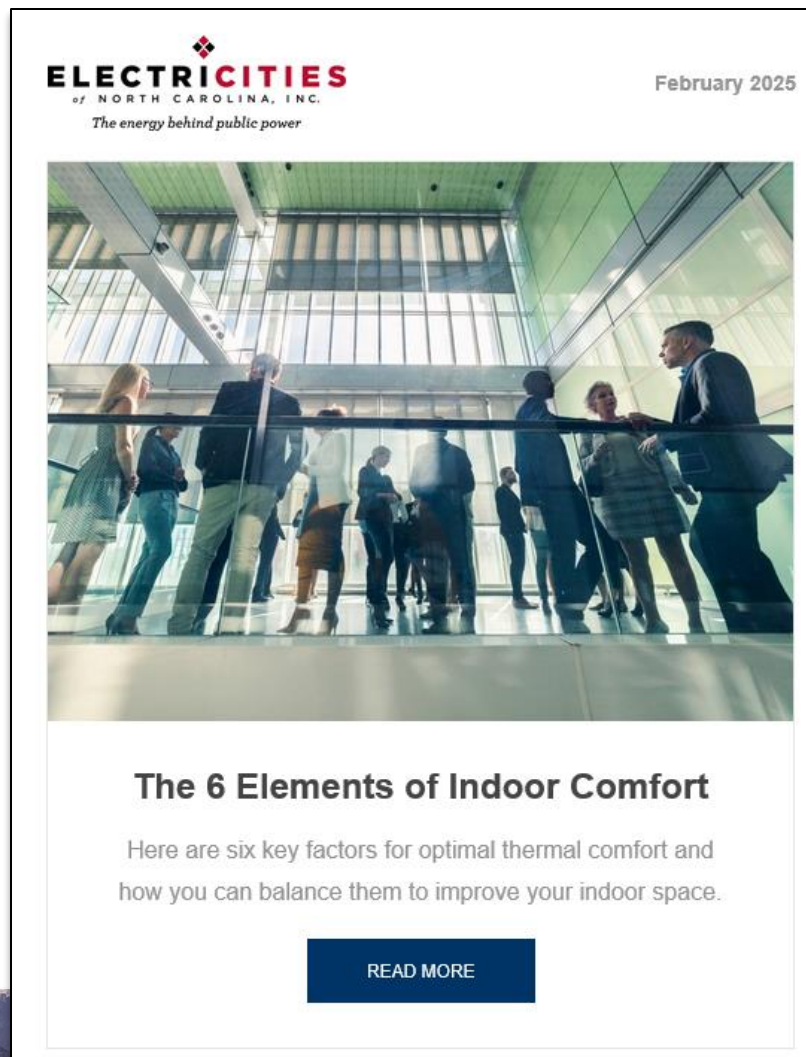
City	Usage
Albemarle	2
Ayden	144
Benson	47
Boone	73
Cherryville	371
Clayton	2
Concord	59
Edenton	4
Fayetteville	85
Gastonia	28
High Point	115
Huntersville	121
Kinston	8
Lexington	4
Monroe	118
New Bern	35
Newton	140
Pinetops	1
Rocky Mount	167
Selma	4
Shelby	4
Statesville	132
Tarboro	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1675</b>



# Questline Newsletter (C&I)

## Customer Education


- Free for members
- Energy efficiency newsletter emailed to your C&I customers
- Fully customizable (use your utility branding & choose your articles)
- Takes 10 minutes to setup



The screenshot shows an email newsletter header for "ELECTRICITIES OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC." with the tagline "The energy behind public power" and the date "February 2025". The main content area features a photograph of people in a modern office building. Below the photo is the article title "The 6 Elements of Indoor Comfort", a short introductory paragraph, and a "READ MORE" button.

**ELECTRICITIES**  
OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC.  
*The energy behind public power*

February 2025



**The 6 Elements of Indoor Comfort**

Here are six key factors for optimal thermal comfort and how you can balance them to improve your indoor space.

[READ MORE](#)

# Website Content

## Do your customers know about these tools?

- Some websites have been redesigned.
  - Some program references are buried.
- ✓ Updating your website and providing easy-to-find links to these programs will help your customers understand the tools and build trust.
  - ✓ Call center volume may be reduced as a result.
  - ✓ Customer satisfaction may improve.



# Program Use Profile

## Overall Usage of Key Programs

- **Energy kits – 43/51**
- **Energy audits – 32/51**
- **Energy Advisor – 24/51**
- **Questline - 22/51**

94.5% of agency members use programs supported by ElectriCities

# Additional Resources

- NCMIPA1 rebate programs
- Residential Heat Pump, Water Heater, Energy Star® (John Keever)
- C&I Lighting Rebate (Emily Lowry)
- NCEMPA member specific rebate programs



# Survey Results



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1. Most valuable programs
  - Energy audits, Customer Service classes, Key Account training
2. New program ideas
  - Rebates for NCEMPA
3. What are you doing that's new and unique
  - Customer portals
4. Most likely to start using within next two years
  - Energy Advisor, Phil's 2-minute drills, Questline, Energy education support

# Contact Us

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## Commercial/ Industrial

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**Velvet Nelson  
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everblue

Energy Saver NC



Everblue is the Program Implementer for the Energy Saver North Carolina Program (ESNC).

Everblue: a Veteran-owned small business, is an IREC (Interstate Renewable Energy Council) accredited training provider.

Everblue manages various aspects of the program, including contractor outreach, training, and management.

[www.goeverblue.com](http://www.goeverblue.com)



APTIM's Energy Transition Team is a national leader in delivering utility and statewide energy rebate programs.

Our local NC team helps deliver aspects of the Energy Savers North Carolina program including management, marketing and community engagement, application processing, reporting, QA/QC and compliance

[www.aptim.com](http://www.aptim.com)



## Program Launch: January 16th, 2025



## Mission

At Energy Saver North Carolina, we're committed to making your journey to energy efficiency as smooth and hassle-free as possible.

## HOMES & HEAR Programs

### **HOMES (Homeowners Managing Efficiency Savings) Program:**

- Focuses on energy efficiency upgrades and retrofits to single-family (eventually multi-family) homes, which must minimally achieve a 20% modeled energy savings.

### **HEAR (Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate) Program:**

- Encourages the adoption of high-efficiency appliances and equipment for low- and moderate-income households.



## HOMES Program Examples

### Energy Efficiency Upgrades

- Insulation
- Air Sealing
- Crawl Space/Attic Work
- Weatherproofing
- Leak Repairs

## HEAR Program Examples

- Heat Pumps
- Electric Heat Pump Water Heater
- Electrical Panel Upgrades
- Energy Efficient Appliances

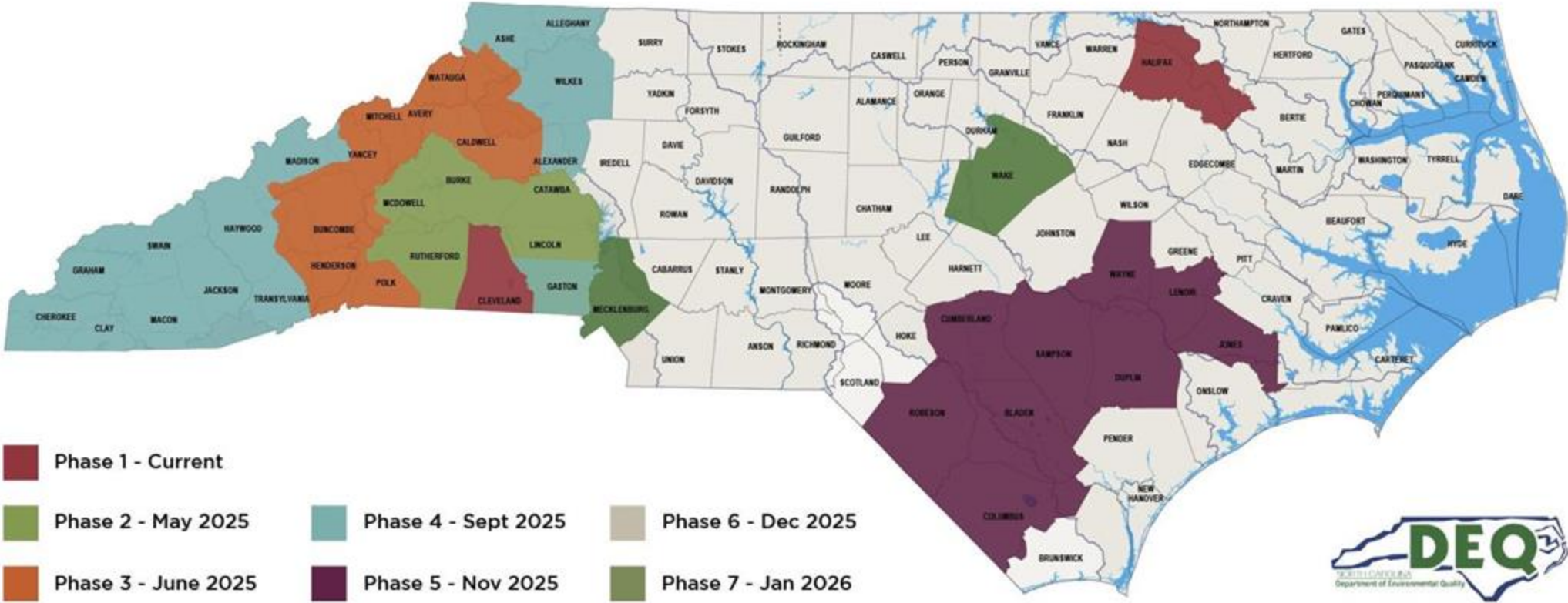
**Over 1000 unique applications in the first 30 days**



# Phased Roll Out

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6	Phase 7
Complete	May 2025	June 2025	Sept 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026
Halifax Cleveland						

# Energy Saver North Carolina County Expansion Phases



## Who is Eligible?

North Carolina **homeowners** or **renters** meeting certain household income requirements and energy savings thresholds are eligible for the program.



## Customer Qualification

Customer Qualification is based on factors such as:

**Area Median Income (AMI)**, which can be a function of proof of income that has been calculated by the program staff.

**Categorical Eligibility**, meaning they participate in a government-sponsored program such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program)

## HOMES (Homeowners Managing Efficiency Savings) Program

These rebates are for improvements that increase the overall energy efficiency of a home, such as insulation, air sealing, and upgrading heating and cooling systems.

Modeled Energy Savings	Income Level	Rebate Amount
<b>Single-family</b>		
20% - 34%	Less than 80% AMI	Up to \$16,000 or 100% of project cost
	80% AMI to 150% AMI	Up to \$2,000 or 50% of project cost
35% or greater	Less than 80% AMI	Up to \$16,000 or 100% of project cost
	80% AMI to 150% AMI	Up to \$4,000 or 50% of project cost
<b>Multifamily</b>		
20% - 34%	A building with at least 50% of households with incomes less than 80% AMI	Up to \$16,000 or 100% of project cost
	A building with at least 50% of households with incomes between 80% and 150% AMI	Up to \$2,000 or 50% of project cost per dwelling unit, up to \$200,000 per building
35% or greater	A building with at least 50% of households with incomes less than 80% AMI	Up to \$16,000 or 100% of project cost
	A building with at least 50% of households with incomes between 80% and 150% AMI	Up to \$4,000 per dwelling unit up to \$400,000 per building

## HEAR (Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates) Program\*

These rebates support the purchase of energy-efficient appliances and the electrification of home systems, like cooking, laundry, hot water, and heating and cooling.

Income Eligibility	Maximum Project Rebate
Households below 80% AMI	100% of project costs up to \$14,000
Households between 80% and 150% AMI	50% of project costs up to \$14,000

Higher income households (>150% AMI) are NOT eligible for this program.

Type of Home Energy Project/Qualified Technology	Rebate Max Per Product	Eligible for New Construction
ENERGY STAR® electric heat pump water heater	Up to \$1,750	Yes
ENERGY STAR electric heat pump for space heating	Up to \$8,000	Yes
Electrical load service center (electrical panel)	Up to \$4,000	No
Electrical wiring	Up to \$2,500	No
Insulation, air sealing, ventilation	Up to \$1,600	No
ENERGY STAR electric heat pump clothes dryer	Up to \$840	Yes
ENERGY STAR electric stove, cooktop, range*	Up to \$840	Yes

\*Rebates are available only when upgrading from a non-electric appliance.



## Customer Application

Customer Application is submitted on the ESNC website (<https://www.energysavernc.org/>).

There is a paper-based option in place.

Questions?

Customer-Facing Website: <https://www.energysavernc.org/>

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# 2025 Connections Summit Breakout Session 5A Survey





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