

The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension (URI CoopExt) provides a window to the University through which stakeholders can access factual, science-based information that addresses environmental, economic and social issues. URI CoopExt has a strong history supporting land stewardship, water resources, healthy lifestyles, and agriculture and food systems.

To empower individuals and community leaders as informed decision makers and advocates with respect to energy, URI CoopExt formed an energy literacy team in 2014 comprised of faculty, staff and undergraduate Energy Fellows. The team seeks to extend science-based resources related to energy consumption, management and production to encourage economic development while improving environmental quality and protecting natural resources.

Past Relevant Efforts

In response to a need to highlight ongoing academic energy research at URI and provide stakeholders with research-based updates on important energy topics, the *Plugged into URI Energy Research Lecture Series* was developed and hosted at URI in 2015, 2016 and 2017. The series consists of curated lectures featuring faculty from URI and other academic institutions, industry professionals and students. Each lecture was developed through careful examination of:

1. Stakeholder input on topics of interest identified in previous lectures, or through personal interviews with key informants;
2. An inventory of existing energy-related URI faculty and staff research and outreach projects and their relevance to current state and local-level energy policy initiatives; and
3. The desire of URI faculty, staff and industry professionals to share their research and knowledge with the public and incorporate a “call for action” for attendees.

Lecture themes have included:

- The Energy and Transportation Nexus
- The Winds of Change: Ocean Energy Generation in Rhode Island
- RI's Push for Energy Efficiency: Lead by Example
- Got Gas? Energy Generation in the Northeast

Lectures within these themes have included presentations from a wide range of disciplines, a selection of which include:

- *Moving Towards Energy Efficiency in Transportation* with Dr. Simona Trandafir (URI Department of Environmental and Natural Resource Economics);
- *Our Nation's First Offshore Wind Farm: Planning to Operations* with Captain John O'Keeffe (Deepwater Wind);
- *Helping Rhode Island Cities and Towns Manage Energy Use* with Carrie Gill, PhD candidate (URI Department of Environmental and Natural Resource Economics);

*Increasing Energy Efficiency Literacy Amongst RI
Decision-Makers Through Educational Outreach Events*

- *MPG for My House? RI's Efforts to Market Building Energy Performance* with Becca Trietch (RI Office of Energy Resources)
- *Batteries for Renewable Energy Storage* with Dr. Brett Lucht (URI Department of Chemistry);
- *Creating a Low Carbon Future and Keeping the Lights On: New England's Energy Generation Challenge* with Ron Gerwatowski, Former MA Assistant Secretary of Energy)

The 2015 and 2016 lecture series' attracted approximately 100 and 200 attendees over three evenings, respectively. The 2017 lecture attracted 100 attendees on one evening. Attendees included University faculty, staff and students, industry professionals and members of the general public. All attendees were encouraged to complete written evaluations following the lectures, the data from which assisted the Energy Literacy Team in measuring the effectiveness of the content, and identifying how improvements might yield increased comprehension amongst attendees.

New Efforts

As the PIER lecture series highlights, URI Cooperative Extension has extensive experience organizing and implementing informational public outreach events. URI CoopExt is well-positioned to plan the 2019 Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council's energy efficiency summit for decision-makers that will highlight the benefits of energy efficiency. This work would include marketing, logistical planning, and content outlines, for execution in March or April of 2019 near the Rhode Island State House. The budget for the event would be \$5,000, to cover the costs associated with venue rental, equipment rental, refreshments, speaker fees and travel expenses, materials and printing, and coordination. All decisions for this event would be submitted to the EERMC Communications Subgroup for review and the full council (if desired).

Sponsorship Opportunity

There is an opportunity for URI Cooperative Extension to partner with the Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Resource Management Council to develop similar content and engage the public with factually-based information on energy efficiency. The URI Cooperative Extension Energy Literacy Team has expertise in developing content, engaging the public and evaluating programming and is seeking a sponsor to continue to deliver valuable energy-based programming to the public and/or targeted audiences. The team would be open to discussing and shaping a lecture series and content based on the mutual goals of URI Cooperative Extension and the EERMC.

Approximate Budget

Lecture series: \$10,000 (undergraduate Energy Fellow coordinator with summer FICA @ \$10.50/hour * 600 hours + refreshments, educational materials, printing, etc.)

EERMC Summit: \$5,000 (staff coordinator + refreshments, educational materials, printing, venue and equipment rental, speaker fees and travel expenses, and miscellaneous:

TOTAL BUDGET: \$10,000 (Lecture Series) + \$5,000 (EERMC Summit) = **\$15,000**