



ECE Co-op Testimonial



Learn how one co-op increased kWh by implementing Steffes ETS heaters in their off-peak electric program



East Central Energy (ECE), a member-owned co-op in Minnesota, identified the need to increase its kWh sales and began offering Steffes Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) heaters in its off-peak electric program. They saw the value Steffes ETS heaters to shift loads, increase kWh sales and improve the bottom line for the co-op and members. After launching Steffes products into their program, the first year resulted in approximately 709,000 kWh off-peak sales for the co-op. Because of the proven success with the Steffes ETS heaters, ECE sees them as an integral tool in their program that will continue to support their long-term growth strategy.

ECE's success can be directly tied to how they implemented Steffes ETS heaters into their program and are now sustaining the sales of these heaters which can be described through the testimony of ECE's Energy Services Supervisor, Justin Jahnz.

Educate our employees, contractors and members

ECE needed engagement from all stakeholders to be successful at selling the Steffes ETS heaters.

1. Employee Engagement: ECE began by educating co-op employees on why Steffes ETS heaters in their off-peak program was good for the coop's bottom line and their future and the excellent value these heating systems brought to their members.
2. Contractor Engagement: "We needed their partnership to drive business and to support installing Steffes heaters," said Justin. Contractor meetings were held to provide information on ECE's program, Steffes heaters, answer questions and encourage involvement.

3. Member Engagement: ECE educated members through statement stuffers and their monthly newsletter. ECE presented Steffes ETS heater options and displayed models at company meetings and a number of community events such as home and garden shows.

Making the buying decision easy

ECE made a change in their culture. They wanted to make it easy for members to purchase a Steffes ETS heater and did this by offering on-bill financing and percent interest for qualified members.

Fast and effortless experience for the member

ECE worked very closely with contractors in order to provide an efficient installation process. When multiple tradesmen are required, as is typical in the case of a hydronic heating system both plumbing and electrical work or in the case of a forced air heating system requires both duct work and electrical work, the co-op helps facilitate communication and scheduling. “It is imperative to have partners to help provide a product as low cost and possible for our members, said Justin.

Implementing Steffes ETS heaters into an off-peak program will:

- Increase kWh sales
- Provide flexibility for shifting loads
- Improve co-op margins
- Provide excellent product and service to members
- Provide value today and long into the future



Product support after the sale and results for the foreseeable future

ECE stocks replacement parts and their energy services specialists are factory trained to perform repairs. They are also a distributor of replacement parts to local contractors. “We are committed to standing behind Steffes heaters for the long-haul,” said Justin.

Justin says, “Steffes ETS heaters have been well received by the co-op employees, local contractors and most importantly, the coop members. It has impacted ECE’s bottom line by increasing kWh sales in 2016 by 709,000 kWh. We see this increasing year-to-year with more Steffes ETS heaters being installed by our co-op members.”