



ELECTRIC THERMAL STORAGE SPACE HEATING POSITION

Background

Electric thermal storage (ETS) space heating programs incorporate large electric resistance space heaters that are “charged” in the night time hours using low-cost, off-peak electricity to provide sufficient heat for the following day.

In October 2009, the International Code Council proposed changes to the International Energy Conservation Code covering space heating. The proposed standard states: “Electric resistance heating shall not be used for space heating. This includes, but is not limited to: electric space heaters, electric furnaces, electric baseboard heaters, electric wall heaters and electric thermal storage.”

While these are voluntary codes, they are often adopted and enforced by a large number of state and local jurisdictions.

How it Affects Great River Energy

As part of its demand-side management program, Great River Energy offers an ETS space heating program to cooperative members in Minnesota. ETS space heaters essentially act as “batteries” that store low-cost off-peak energy including renewable energy. Electricity demand plummets in the overnight hours, which is often when wind turbines generate the most power. Because electricity must be consumed at the precise moment it is generated, ETS water heaters provide a means of storing that electricity and compensating for the volatility of wind generation and reducing electricity demand peaks.

Great River Energy’s position

Great River Energy opposes the International Code Council’s proposed ban on electric resistance space heating.

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