Cascade Natural Gas Corporation Annual Conservation Achievement Report Calendar Year 2020

# **Community Outreach Report**

Communications about program availability to rate payers remains an important tool to promote Cascades EE offerings. Although in person outreach came to a screeching halt during Q1 of 2020, Cascade's program outreach did not, as the Company pivoted to online engagement for its Residential, Low Income, and C/I programs.

Before the COVID-19 shutdown, Cascade was planning to diversify its outreach from previous years along with the continuing participation in annual meetings, fairs, sporting events, community festivals, and conferences.

Before offices closed, Cascade also started revisiting all the Washington district offices to educate staff about the current offerings and explore additional ways to better reach customers within the unique territories. Cascade's outreach coordinator, media specialist, and builder program coordinator were able to visit 2 of the 9 district offices in 2020. Meetings and informative presentations about the energy efficiency department were presented to office and field staff in Aberdeen and Bremerton. While in the area, the team was also able to meet with several Trade Ally contractors to answer frequently asked questions about eligibility and rebate criteria.

Prior to the pandemic Cascade expanded its messaging to include advertising with the Bellingham Mount Baker Theater, a live performance theater, to access a customer base outside of the usual home related venues. Advertisements in playbills were printed until the theater was temporarily closed March 14. Before the closure, half page ads were run in 3 playbills, distributed in February and March.



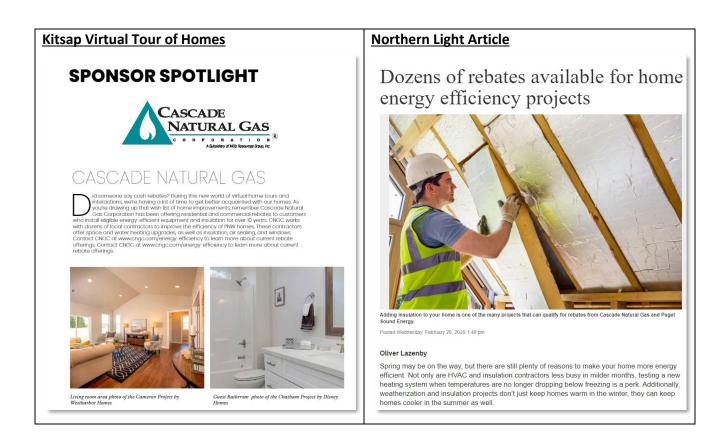
Due to the postponement of live performances, Mount Baker Theater agreed to extend the 2020 contract printings to 2021 when programs resume.

# Residential Update

As community events were limited in 2020, the Company shifted to a virtual and print outreach approach rather than tabling and attending events in person. The Company frequently messages at outdoor events including baseball fields and by April, there was hope for a reduced capacity baseball season for the city of Longview so a new display banner for the outfield was created, but it was ultimately sidelined due to closures.

Cascade increased its presence in print outreach with featured articles in periodicals in Zone 1 and Zone 2. All of which were also posted digitally to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

- a. The Daily World <u>https://www.thedailyworld.com/life/nailing-it-down-rebates-</u> available-for-natural-gas-heated-homes/
- b. The Northern Light Blaine and Birch Bay's Community Newsletter Article <u>https://www.thenorthernlight.com/stories/dozens-of-rebates-available-for-home-energy-efficiency-projects,9709?</u>
- c. Green Home Guide with Sustainable Connections https://sustainableconnections.org/green-home-guide-2020



Cascade was also able to continue partnering virtually with the Bremerton Navy Energy week events in October. The Company contributed a <u>short informative video</u> to their events line-up along with small prizes for participants.

### Magazine Outreach

Cascade expanded its outreach audience by advertising in several Zone 3 local magazines, Best Version Media (BVM) and Taylored Living. BVM is distributed monthly which, includes Zone 3: West Pasco, Moses Lake; Zone 1: Anacortes, NW Skagit County, 2 magazines in Bellingham (around Lake Samish and South Hill/Fairhaven) quarter or eighth page ads and an occasional article. Participating in a magazine that is community oriented and comes out on a consistent basis is powerful for the program when it comes to influencing human behavior and decision making. The more someone sees a brand or program, the more likely they are to remember it so repetition is key. Customers who have been on the high efficiency fence may have a change of heart after they've become familiar with the EE program by the second or third ad. Additionally, Cascade implemented a Promotional Code beginning in 2021 that will allow the program to track customer touches reached through BVM by rewarding them with a \$20 promo for acting on the information to install high-efficiency upgrades.

#### Taylored Living: Fall 2020 Ad and article



### **BVM Fall Article**



You know full is in the air when there's a crisp bite of front, and pumpkin spice takes over your local cafe. In preparation for the changing season, you turn on your furnace for the first time in months to burn off the dusty smell of inactivity and... nothing happens. You check the pilot light, the thermostat, the on/off switch a few too many times, and still no best. Luckily, Cascade Natural Gas has your back!

STEP 1 - Visit CNOC.com/energy-efficiency and choose the "click to find out more" buttor. Cascade has more than 100 local contractors participating in its Trade Ally program. Visit the Trade Ally Directory and pull up a list of contractors who work in your area.

Since the list is sorted by xip code and type of upgrade, you call a few of the heating contractors on the list (Cascade recommends three), and, as feared, you need to replace the

# NOTHING BETTER FOR THE SEASON THAN PUMPKIN SPICE AND A COMFY HOME!

By Kris Forck

furnace. Fortunately, Cascade is there for you, offering more than a dozen home improvement relates for existing homes.

Your Trade Ally contractor lets you know that the highly efficient furrace you're eyeing qualifies for a \$400 relate! (Any natural gas furrace over 95% APUE will qualify) Fantastic, you decide to have that 97% efficient furnace installed before the first ends map strikes.

STEP 2 - Revisit CNGC.com/energy-efficiency and click on the Washington Residential Rebate Application. You fill out and submit the online application and attach a copy of your invoice (printed applications are also available).

STEP 3 - Sit back in your warm entry home, cradling a pumpkin spice latte, and await your rebute check by mail, looking forward to touring the changing leaves and pulling out all your favorite krit hats.



### **Google Analytics**

Google Analytics indicates a similar to the program's application intake, with a strong start to the year's views in the beginning of the year, a lag throughout the spring when COVID-19 lockdowns occurred, and followed by a small surge in the summer. The impact of an Energy Savers Kit focused bill insert is readily apparent in Figure 1 with the EE landing pageviews (/energy-efficiency/) increasing 70%. On this page, customers could apply for an ESK or email their request.

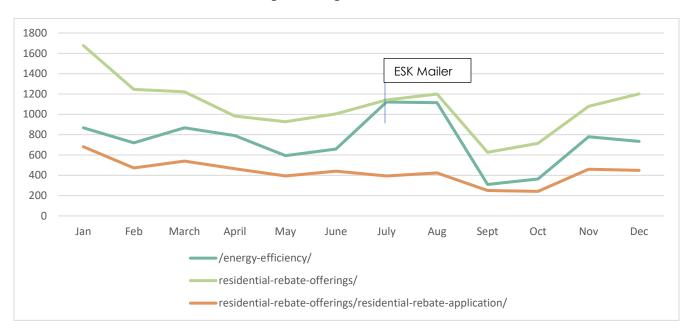


Figure 1: Page Reviews

Based off Google Analytics, the EE program has been showcased on a wide variety of big box stores. The most common referrals coming from Home Depot and Lowes as between these two stores 256 customers were directed to the EE landing page after viewing a product for purchase. Other bog box stores include Best Buy and Amazon. The main product customers were looking at that led them to Cascade's website were thermostats. This makes sense because thermostats are one of the few measures that can be self-installed. Customers can order their thermostat online, then take that electronic receipt and apply for a rebate with their electronic receipt. During a time when economic constraints were high enabling customers to take proactive steps such as installing a thermostat proved to be a popular offer. After the purchase was complete, customers could conveniently click on the *apply online* ad to submit an online application with Cascade.

### Online

Cascade recognizes fireplaces are one of the more difficult measures for customers to confirm eligibility and the Company took the opportunity to break down some of these barriers by developing a relationship with fireplace manufactures including Lopi Stoves and Travis Industries. The Cascade

logo as well as a link to the EE program landing page were placed on these 3<sup>rd</sup> party sites, informing customers of qualifying fireplace models.

As mentioned, verification of fireplace efficiencies can be tricky. With several efficiency ratings, customers may not feel confident their purchase will meet Cascade eligibility requirements. Ads such as the screenshot provided below alleviate the possibility for confusion on eligibility and takes them directly to the Company's EE application. Customers can then download the PDF application or bookmark the URL to return after the install is complete.

Lopi Stoves – <u>https://www.lopistoves.com/product/cypress-gsr/</u> DESIGN THE FIRE OF YOUR DREAMS SELECT YOUR FAVORITE OPTIONS UPLOAD A PHOTO OF YOUR ROOM MAKE YOUR VISION A REALITY HERE ONGOING CHANGEOUT & INCENTIVE PROGRAMS	
CASCADE NATURAL GAS Vashington Resident? Cascade Natural Gas customer? This Model Qualifies for \$300 Cash Rebate. ►click here for details	
ENERGY STAR <sup>®</sup> Rebate Finder – <u>https://www.energystar.gov/rebate-finder</u>	
Sealing and Insulation\$0.75 to \$1.00 / 09/01/2014 - ongoingProductssq ftMail-in Rebate?Cascade Natural Gas Corporation   866-626-4479	
Cascade Natural Gas Corporation offers a mail-in rebate on the purchase and installation of select sealing and insulation products. Offer valid 09/01/2014 through no current end date. Other restrictions may apply; please visit the website for additional details.	

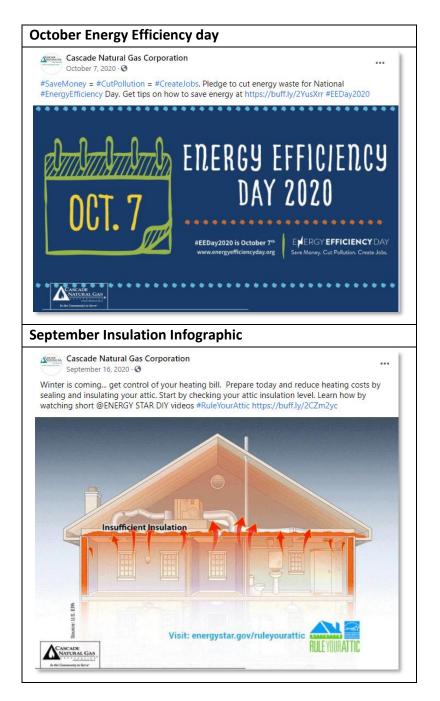
	<b>Tankless Gas Water Heaters</b> Mail-in Rebate ? Cascade Natural Gas Corporation   866-450-0005	\$350	02/01/2019 - ongoir	ng	
	Cascade Natural Gas Corporation offers a mail-in rebat and installation of select tankless gas water heaters. O through no current end date. Other restrictions may ap website for additional details.	Offer valid 02/01/2019	Visit website to learn I	more	
Home De	pot – <u>https://www.homedepot.com</u>	/p/Rheem-Perfc	ormance-Platinum	1-9-5-GPM-	
Natural-O	Gas-High-Efficiency-Indoor-Tankless-V	Water-Heater-EC	OH200DVLN-2/3	<u>04820618</u>	
Availat	ble Rebates		<b>P</b> Bellingham, WA 9	08225 Update	×
-	Performance Platinum 9.5 GPM Natural Ga Item #: 304820618   Model #: ECOH200DVLN-2   ENER \$650 in rebates	° ,	Tankless Water Heater		
Amou \$35	Cascade Natural Gas - Claim Wi WA C Submit Online				-
	More Details 🗸				

				<b>Q</b> Bellingham, WA	98225	Update	×
70 Non 02	Google Nest Learning Smart The Item #: 753160   Model #: T3007ES   ENI		Compatibility (3rd C	Generation) - Stainl	ess Steel	T3007ES	
Amount <b>\$75</b>	Program - residential <b>*</b> Puget Sound Energy (Gas and Electric) - WA	Buy on or After: Buy on or Before: Claim By: Claim Within:	January 1, 2021 December 31, 2021 December 31, 2021 60 days of purchase				
	Apply Online						
Amount <b>\$75</b>	Program - multi-family Puget Sound Energy (Gas and Electric) (Multi Family) - WA 2 <sup>a</sup>	Buy on or After:	January 1, 2021				
	More Details $\lor$						
Amount \$25	Program - residential 希 Cascade Natural Gas - WA C	Buy on or After: Claim Within:	February 1, 2021 90 days of purchase				
	More Details 🗸						
EcoRebates Terms @	D 2021					Clos	se

	6 72 		lodel #: EB-STATE3L	ermostat - Black .T-02   ENERGY STAR ce	rtified		
	Amount \$75	Program - reside Puget Sound E and Electric) - 1	nergy (Gas	Buy on or After: Buy on or Before: Claim By: Claim Within:	January 1, 2021 December 31, 2021 December 31, 2021 60 days of purchase		
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	EVIEN its & Rebates	Residential Professi	ional Commercial	Engineers Products	Resources Tools	Where to buy	
			Reba	te Center			
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C	Search for produc	ts (ESC to clear)		<b>Q</b> Bé	ellingham, WA 98226	Update Locate	
76	products found	▼ Filter					)
	Model #:	en NCB-150E Combir NCB-150E (natural gas)   ENERGY Product 400 in rebates A		warrantied for comme	ercial use)		
	Amount Pro	gram - residential 🎢 cade Natural Gas -	Buy on or After: Claim Within:	February 1, 2021 90 days of purchase			
		Submit Online Pre-approval required. Potails ~					

### Social Media

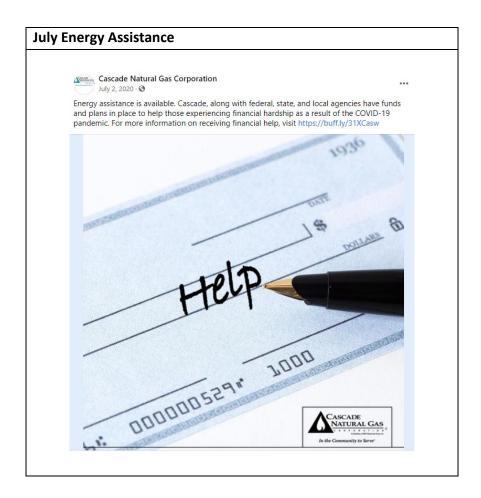
Social media has always been a powerful tool to reach customers, especially in hard to reach territories. While many were isolating in their homes, Cascade leveraged social media to remind customers of the support they have to execute high efficiency installs. A majority of the ads throughout the year were EE tips and no-cost low-cost upgrades with a link to the Company's website. For customers needing an emergency equipment replacement, or those seeking greater home comfort, the ads were intended to provide information on how Cascade could help offset those home improvement costs.



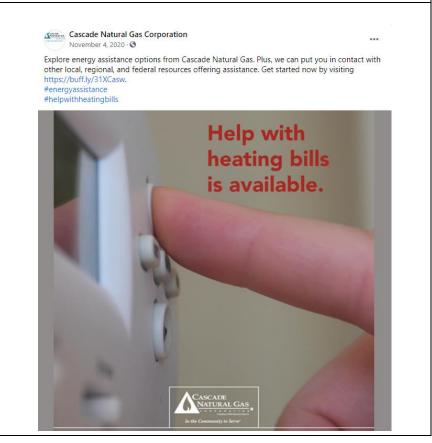


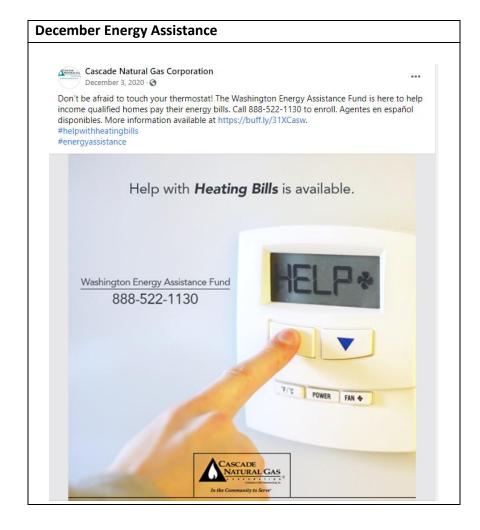
### Low Income Weatherization Social Media Posts





### November Energy Assistance





January	February	March
<ul> <li>✓ Lynden Tribune</li> <li>✓ CWHBA Buyers guide</li> <li>✓ Bremerton District Presentation</li> <li>✓ EE tips – Weather stripping</li> <li>✓ Low Income</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ Mount Baker Theater (MBT)</li> <li>✓ Bellingham District Presentation</li> <li>✓ C/I water heat</li> <li>✓ EE tips – replace GF filter</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Cascadia Weekly</li> <li>SICBA Home &amp; Garden</li> <li>EE tips – Saint Patrick's Day</li> <li>Northern Lights article highlighted on social platforms         <ul> <li>https://www.thenorthernlight.com/stories/d</li> <li>ozens-of-rebates-available-for-home-energy-efficiency-</li></ul></li></ul>
April	Мау	June
<ul> <li>✓ WEAF \$400 grant</li> <li>✓ Earth Day – Low- cost no-cost</li> <li>✓ LLCA Directory</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ BVM</li> <li>✓ New baseball banner created, postponed</li> </ul>	✓ BVM
July	August	September
<ul> <li>✓ BVM</li> <li>✓ Low Income – Experiencing hardships?</li> <li>✓ Sustainable Connections</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ BVM</li> <li>✓ GF rebates</li> <li>✓ Low Income – you're not alone</li> <li>✓ ESR Tare pads went out</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ BVM</li> <li>✓ 'Nailing down rebates' Q&amp;A (also posted on social accounts)</li> <li>✓ CWHBA Buyers Guide</li> <li>✓ EE tips – breathe clean air, replace GF filter</li> <li>✓ Low-to no-cost tips</li> <li>✓ 'Rule your attic' – weatherization</li> <li>✓ C/I EE Incentives</li> <li>✓ Navy base – EE tips video</li> </ul>
October	November	December
<ul> <li>✓ BVM</li> <li>✓ Lynden Tribune</li> <li>✓ EE tips video</li> <li>✓ ENERGY STAR</li> <li>✓ WEAF video</li> <li>✓ EE Day</li> <li>✓ EE tips</li> </ul>	<ul><li>✓ BVM</li><li>✓ Low Income WEAF</li></ul>	<ul> <li>✓ BVM</li> <li>✓ Low Income WEAF</li> </ul>

### Table 1: 2020 Outreach Calendar

# Holiday Card

The department continued to develop holiday cards for Trade Ally contractors and partner organizations as a means of positive reinforcement for helping the Company promote EE while recognizing the joint successes throughout the year.

Because most of the program's community partners were not in the office, Cascade stepped outside of tradition and developed an electronic card delivered through email which saved a fair amount of time and allowed the practice of recognizing partners to continue in a remote model.

Going digital saved not only time but natural resources as well. The third-party service Greenvelope provided a premade email merge template making for a swift painless process, reaching more than 50% of the intended audience. The impression chart provided by Greenvelope shows a 52% open rate.







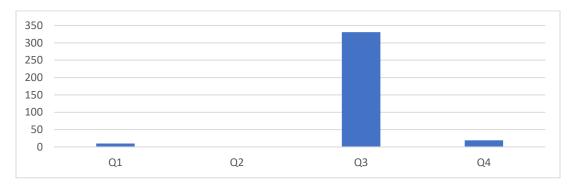
# **Bill Inserts**

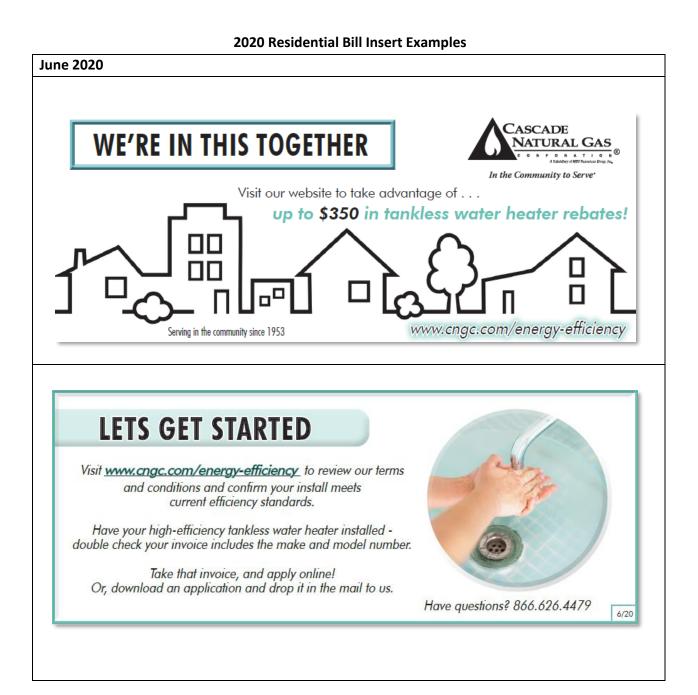
Cascade continued to send EE messaging through monthly bill inserts throughout the year. Once COVID-19 restrictions were in place, the program used this line of communication to remind customers of the financial support through incentives available from Cascade. In the summer months the messaging was focused on topics that were timely and would resonate with customers, like hygiene and home comfort. Water heating measures were highlighted throughout the summer, with heating upgrades featured throughout the winter. Spending more time at home put a strain on space and water heat systems, leading customers in search of Do It Yourself low-cost no-cost solutions.

Starting in March, the department focused on low-cost upgrades by highlighting programmable thermostat rebates. The response was phenomenal with a 642% increase in thermostat phone calls, going from seven to 52 in a month, split down the middle between pre-purchase and pre-application calls.

Due to high interest and demand from customers for low cost ways to decrease utility costs during the pandemic the Residential program developed an insert focused on Energy Saving Kits (ESKs) in the summer which saw historic uptake. Appliance standards were changing at the end of the year which would necessitate removal of the ESK offering so , Cascade decided on a final push that resulted in ESK calls going from zero calls to 195 for July and 113 for August and customers were emailing and applying online at a higher rate than the department had previously experienced.

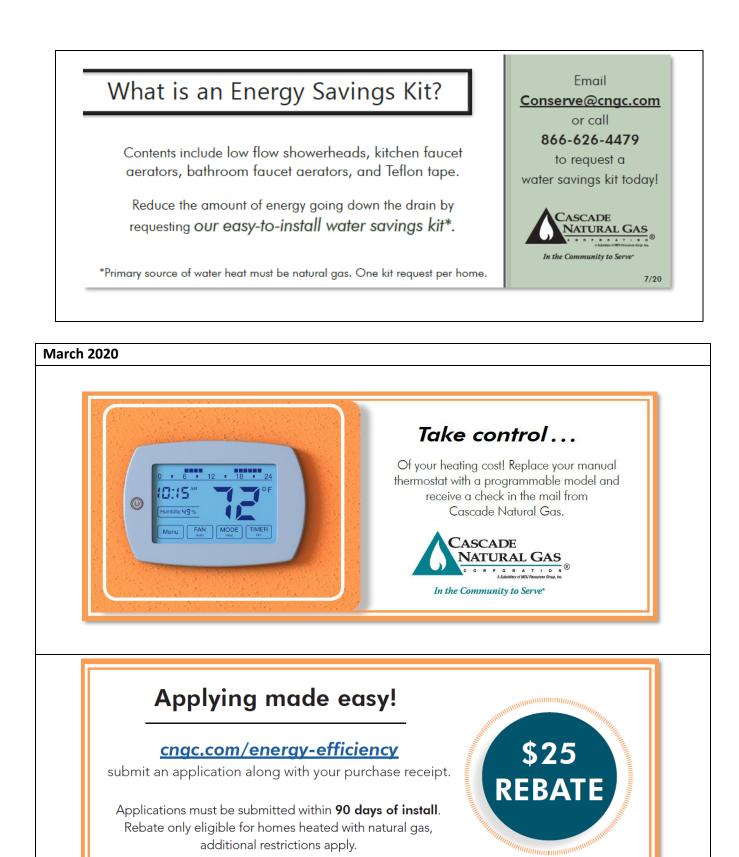






### October 2020





Questions? Call 866-626-4479

3/20

#### **December Low Income Bill Inserts**



# Struggling to keep your home warm and cozy this winter?

Managing energy costs can be a burden. Cascade Natural Gas is proud to partner with your local weatherization agency to deliver whole home energy upgrades to low income households.



# Weatherization for income qualified households involves a range of services including heating equipment replacement and repair, duct sealing, and insulation.

Washington State Low Income Weatherization Program Income Eligibility Guidelines Income levels must be no more than the greater of 60% State median income or 200% of Federal Poverty.

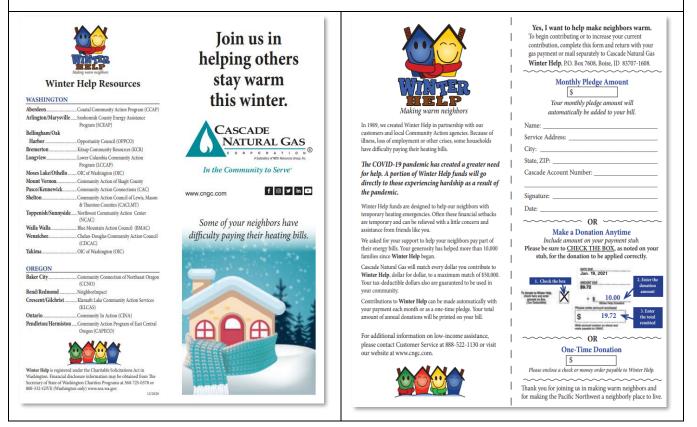
Members in Household	1 Person	2 People	3 People	4 People	5 People	6 People	7 People	8 People	
60% State Median Income	\$30,204	\$39,497	\$48,791	\$58,084	\$67,377	\$76,671	\$78,413	\$80,156	
200% of Poverty	\$25,520	\$34,480	\$43,440	\$52,400	\$61,360	\$70,320	\$79,280	\$88,240	

Please refer to https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/weatherization-and-energy-efficiency/ or contact your local weatherization agency for the latest income qualifications.



Call 888-522-1130 to get connected with the weatherization agency serving your community or email conserve@cngc.com.

### Also available online <a href="https://www.cngc.com/customer-service/monthly-customer-communications/">https://www.cngc.com/customer-service/monthly-customer-communications/</a>



### Home Builder and Owners

The EE department continues its support of local Chambers, Home Builder Associations and homeowners looking to install high efficiency upgrades by providing advertisements for various events including annual regional directories, Home and Garden shows and Home Tours. Cascade showcased quarter to full page ads for home building associations; participants were as follows, Lower Columbia Contractor's Association (LCCA), Skagit and Island County Builders Association (SICBA), Central Washington Home Builders Association (CWHBA), Kitsap Building Association (KBA), and Building Industry Association of Whatcom County (BIAWC)..

Cascade included an ad in the Cascadia Weekly Home & Garden show insert and staff were able to meet with a score of contractors during the Building Industry Association of Whatcom County Home & Garden Show before the COVID-19 shut down making connections to add Trade Allies to Cascade's network or further educate TA's on the EE program.

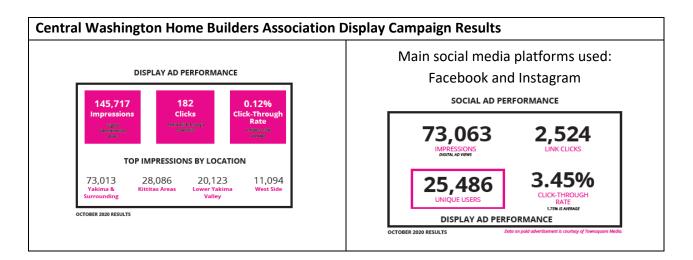
a. Cascadia Weekly home garden guide – paid advertising (page 5) http://www.cascadiaweekly.com/pdfs/special/2020 home guide.pdf





As social distancing requirements didn't relax in the fall, Cascade chose to advertise in digital directories and virtual tour magazines in lieu of the traditional in person event attendance. The Central Washington Home Builder's Association did a virtual Toast of the Tour showcasing 12 popular homes from the past and present. This virtual event specifically targeted homeowners, in the market for a new home, remodel, or those considering moving to the Yakima and Kittitas area. The CNGC rebate sticker from the previous year was repurposed to highlight which homes had rebate eligible equipment installed. In addition to the virtual tour, 2,000 copies were printed at 50 different distribution locations, as well as 194 radio ad spots.

One unforeseen silver lining from the virtual, remote events was the ability of staff to attend more Home Builder Association member meetings which were logistically prohibitive in past years.



a. Central Washington Home Builders Association Toast to the Tour (pg 24) https://emflipbooks.com/flipbooks/CWHBA/2020\_TourDirectory/

Kitsap Builders Association moved their tour to a virtual website featuring a magazine, sponsor list and interactive voting for participants. Cascade contributed a short write-up featuring the incentive program.

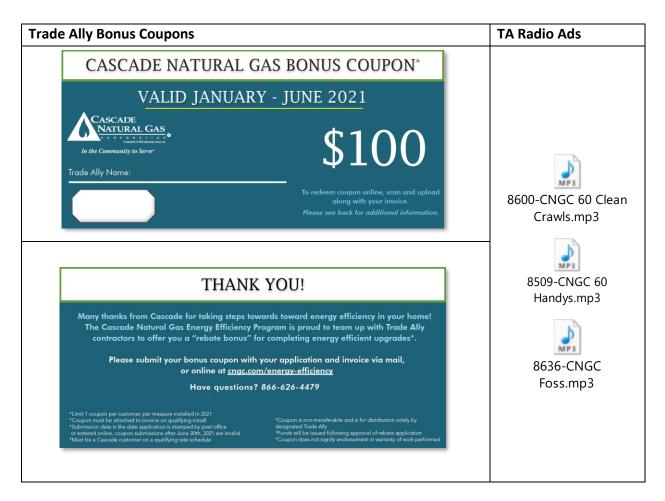
> b. Kitsap Builders Association Tour of homes magazine (page 10). https://www.kbatourofhomes.com/magazine





### **Bonus Coupons**

Trade Allies received benefits for their continued partnership with the program, including 15 bonus coupons to promote high efficiency upgrades. These coupons are typically valued at \$100 in the early summer months, then dropping to \$50 in the fall. This decrease in value was intended to help drive EE installs during the slower summer months. However, in 2020 the department decided to keep the value at \$100 all year to help combat economic constraints from COVID-19. Keeping the value at \$100 was intended to not only help Trade Allies close on these high-efficiency upgrades, but to provide as much incentive as possible to cover the gap between a standard and a high-efficiency upgrade.



### **Radio Campaigns**

The Residential program once more hosted a Radio Campaign in Zone 1 to promote its Trade Allies during the heating season (January 2021 & Fall 2020) when customers experience cold weather and higher energy bills. The pilot used a donut ad format, housing consistent Cascade program information at the beginning and end of the ad throughout all advertisements and featuring various Trade Allies and their offerings in the center of the ad. In total for 2020, twenty-three Trade Allies took advantage of the cooperative marketing benefit, equating to up to 460 total 30 second ads aired.

# Camaloch Community Outreach

Cascade's EE department also partnered with its Business Development in an outreach campaign to an existing community on Camano Island. Cascade installed natural gas mains in 2000, and there are approximately 175 homes using electricity and/or propane for their space and water heat. The customer-focused outreach informed residents of their eligibility for high efficiency natural gas upgrades. Cascade recruited Trade Allies serving the Camano Island area to offer special promotional discounts for the Camaloch Community interested in efficiency.





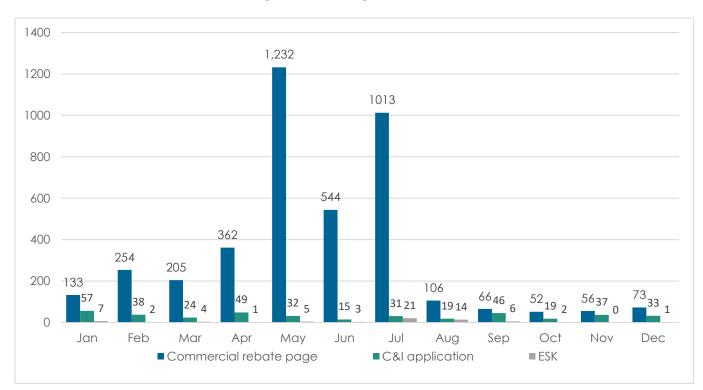
# **Commercial Outreach**

### **Outreach activity**

The TRC community outreach team supported several tactics in 2020 to drive program awareness and participation for Commercial and Industrial rebates. In late Q1/early Q2, the team shifted outreach efforts and adjusted messaging to address the ongoing pandemic. This shift included creating a series of regional digital ads and adapting messaging to align with customer priorities.

### Website

Compared to 2019, the commercial rebate page experienced a 324% increase and the C/I application page experienced a 60% increase. May and July had the most visitors to the rebate landing page which aligns with the COVID-19-related digital ads and the Google search ads running during those months. See Figure 3 for 2020 page details.



### Figure 3: 2020 Pageviews

### Advertising

To address the COVID-19 pandemic, the Company's C/I implementation vendor TRC Companies developed a suite of digital ads in April and May that ran in seven regional publications:

- Tri-Cities Area Journal of Business Real Estate & Construction Newsletter
- Kitsap Sun
- Yakima Herald
- The Daily News
- Skagit Valley Herald
- Bellingham Herald
- Tri-Cities Herald

The campaign was launched to promote rebates to help support businesses during a challenging time. The ads were split into two messaging themes: "Saving matters now more than ever – and we can help" and "Get paid to save energy". In addition to placing ads with regional publications, the team ran a Google search ad and a paid LinkedIn post in May.

In total, the 28 regional ads resulted in 349,590 impressions and 181 clicks. The LinkedIn ad resulted in 7,298 impressions and 40 clicks. The Google search ads performed extremely well with a total of 6,020 impressions, 2,417 click and equating to 40.15% of times the impression was clicked on, which is above industry average.

In addition to the COVID-19-specific ads, TRC developed print, digital and radio ads to increase general awareness and reach of the CNGC brand and C/I rebate program. Advertisements promoting the program were developed for the following publications/channels:

- Tri Cities Journal of Business
- Bellingham Business Journal
- Kitsap Sun
- Radio the team placed a series of 30-second radio spots with the Cascade Radio Group in November that were broadcasted 10 times a week in both Skagit and Whatcom Counties.
- Google search due to the April/May success of the Google Ads, the team ran two additional Google Ads to drive traffic to the CNG website and assist customers in finding rebates.

### Collateral

In 2020, the TRC team produced various types of collateral – including fact sheets, bill inserts and direct mail – promoting both specific measures and program offerings in general. New this year, the program created a handout that highlights common high-efficiency gas upgrades for each C/I sector. The handout was uploaded to the website and will be used by the business development team to talk to customers and Trade Allies about the program. The team also developed the following:

- Tankless water heater fact sheet features two mini case studies from Yakima Home2 Suites as well as the Hanford House
- Four bill inserts tankless water heaters, radiant heating, COVID-19 messaging and rebates for all sectors
- ESK insert included in ESKs sent to customers
- Spray-valve direct mailer sent to select restaurants and senior assisted living facilities
- Radiant heating fact sheet –two mini case studies featuring Mission Aviation Training Academy and Amro Nurseries

### **Email Blasts**

Six emails were distributed in 2020 to CNGC customers and Trade Allies within Cascade's service territory, and updates incentives and customer stories. The emails had an average open rate of 30.2% and an average click rate of 5.2% - an increase from 2019.

Date/Topic	Open Rate	Click Rate
2/27 – Tankless water heaters	33%	9%
3/24 – COVID-19 specific email	35%	3%
4/7 – General program promotion	39%	7%
8/23 – Radiant Heating	23%	4%
10/21 – Solutions for all businesses	31%	5%
12/23 – Happy holidays note	20%	2%

### Table 2: 2020 Email Blasts