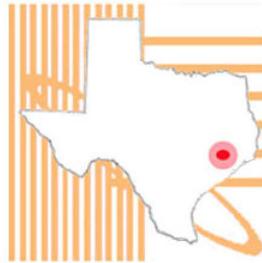


IBPSA-USA, Houston Chapter Quarterly Publication Newsletter

International **B**uilding **P**erformance **S**imulation **A**ssociation

"IBPSA is a non-profit international society of building performance simulation researchers, developers and practitioners, dedicated to improving the built environment."



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New rules of play: COMNET

(published by Institute for Market Transformation and adapted for this newsletter)



COMNET (the Commercial Energy Services Network) is a new project intended to create a unified technical protocol for comparing the energy efficiency of, and calculating an energy rating for, commercial buildings.

COMNET seeks to fill an important void by creating clear, consistent, rigorous and easy-to-use methods for demonstrating compliance with tax deduction provisions for energy-efficient commercial buildings and building systems, as created by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and extended to December 31, 2013. The new protocol is being designed to allow use in code compliance, utility incentive programs, appraisal and financing, and commercial building energy labeling. It is intended that COMNET will complement various existing calculation methods used in these areas, as well as emerging methods under development. The COMNET team is committed to working with interested private and public agencies on technical, policy, and management issues to ensure maximum compatibility and applicability.

Current terms used to describe two kinds of ratings have focused on “asset ratings” and “operational ratings.” The “asset” rating refers to the energy features built into the building and therefore the potential or “designed” energy performance (rating) of the building. The “operational” rating refers to the “achieved” energy performance of the building in actual operation. Like RESNET, COMNET is expecting to help generate “designed” ratings of buildings and/or building systems — that is, the calculation and rating of energy savings will be based on actual physical features of the building as determined from design plans and field verification. One critical technical aspect of COMNET will be the establishment of standard rule set for defining hypothetical reference buildings or systems against which the subject building or systems will be compared. This rule set will be made readily available in the public domain so that any provider can freely incorporate the rules into energy modeling software for automatic generation of reference buildings.

We envision that COMNET will allow either standard assumptions or customized parameters, or both, to be used to define operating conditions for the subject building.

COMNET is working to complement EPA's ENERGY STAR, currently the most successful and best-established commercial-building operational rating system in the United States. EPA's rating system can also be used during the design phase of buildings. Through Target Finder, it is possible to generate a consistent "design" rating based on the estimated energy use of the design. COMNET will focus on the design-rating approach. The COMNET team is maintaining strong communication and collaboration with EPA to ensure mutual support for both programs. One specific desirable outcome will be that the COMNET protocol will be available to generate input data for use in ENERGY STAR's Target Finder™ tool.

In addition, the COMNET team has initiated communications with the ASHRAE Building Energy Label Program that is aiming at both "asset" and "operations" energy ratings for a commercial buildings energy label. Both project teams will consult closely on an ongoing basis.

In California, the COMNET team is coordinating its technical work to integrate with coming changes in the Title 24 Nonresidential Standards compliance framework being supported by the California Energy Commission in conjunction with continuing US Energy Department development of the EnergyPlus energy simulation software tool at the National Renewable Energy Lab.

To ensure the credibility of the system, COMNET will provide certification standards for raters of commercial buildings. RESNET has a comprehensive system for certifying trainers, raters, and field inspectors for the home energy rating program. RESNET's system is a clear starting point for developing COMNET certification protocols. Clearly, however, COMNET certification will have to reflect many technical and institutional factors unique to the commercial sector. RESNET and the Institute for Market Transformation (IMT), under the supervision of NBI, are now taking the lead on mapping out criteria and procedures for certification of individuals and institutions involved with COMNET training and implementation. A primary focus of this work will be to ensure compatibility with existing certification processes already in place among professional societies and governmental licensing agencies and to make maximum appropriate use of existing certifications and credentials.

The projects is being managed by New Building Institute along with the following partners: Institute for Market Transformation, RESNET, Architectural Energy Coporation, Energy Soft, Florida Solar Energy Center, Energy & Environmental Economics, McHugh Energy Consultants, NRDC.

For details please refer to: <http://www.imt.org/comnet.html>

EVENTS

Our next meeting would be held at **Gensler** on **March 31, 4:30pm**. Following a brief presentation on some of the popular simulation tools and our first year in retrospect, we would host nominations/election of officers for 2010-2011.



Other events of interest:

AIA, March 16

Building Enclosure Council Meeting

ASHRAE, March 23

Green Buildings, LEED and the (Proposed)
ASHRAE Standard 189.1

AIA, March 24

Building Information Modeling Committee
Meeting

AIA, April 15

Gulf Coast Green Symposium and Professional
Expo

ASHRAE, April 27

TAMU Student Presentations on Research

Welcome new participants

Please welcome the following people who would like to participate in our future meetings:

Calvin Roberts, Centerpoint Energy

Greg McMeans, Hunton Trane

Harry Rahman, Huper Optik USA

Juan Jose Vargas, Energy Engineer & Green Building Consultant

Ralph Lusby, Ridgecrest Energy Advisors

Richard R. Glenn, Rice & Gardner Consultants Inc.

Are You a Member???

To become a member, simply fill out the application form found at the address below:

<http://www.ibpsa.us/membership.shtml>

Existing members may use the form to renew their membership or update their contact information.

The IBPSA World Board is made up of four elected officers, four elected members-at-large, the past President, plus a member elected from each of the IBPSA Affiliates. As is standard procedure, the IBPSA Board has nominated a slate of eight Board Members to serve the next 2-year term. Please register as a member to IBPSA to vote or propose your own nominations.

Call for Articles

This newsletter serves as a wonderful tool to circulate useful information and upcoming events across the modeling community. Please share these, or your own opinions with us by contacting Richard Stalnaker, (rstalnaker@rlengineers.com), or Kapil Upadhyaya (kapilu@kirksey.com). All comments and information are greatly appreciated.