ABSTRACT

Over the past 14 years, the Pacific Northwest has seen a dramatic change in the level of regulation that governs energy consumption in new and renovated residential buildings. The Northwest Power Planning Act of 1980 provided a mandate to states in the Northwest that they conserve energy. These states include Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Washington.

The vehicle for the changes were utility incentive programs, optional city and county adoption of model conservation standard (MCS) level codes, and increasingly stringent state energy codes. As codes were adopted, translating written requirements to energy-efficient buildings became paramount. Adopting a code is important, but motivating enforcement personnel and the shelter industry is just as important. The State of Washington has been in the business of training these groups for the past 11 years.

Washington has developed a modular training program where trainers do their utmost to accommodate the limited time and travel budgets of local building department staff. Training is held at, or close to, jurisdictions, lasts not more than two to three hours, and thoroughly covers the training topic. Training is a mixture explaining requirements, providing supporting rationale, and motivating participants. The six training modules consist of Orientation to the Code, Plan Review, Component Performance, Mechanical Ventilation, Additions and Troubleshooting, and Field Inspection.

Applying a highly technical code isn't a reasonable proposition without a system for organizing the information into a usable and efficient compliance system. Washington has developed a matrix of forms that educate, organize requirements by inspection, and provide a clear audit trail for all responsible parties. Washington has also developed an independent study course, an Energy Code Enforcement Training Manual, and an energy code certification program for enforcement personnel.