

ENERGY STAR Awards Continue to Display Broad Diversity

By Martin Flusberg



The US Environmental Agency (EPA) recently announced the winners of the 2022 ENERGY STAR Awards. A total of 211 companies and organizations were named, continuing the trend of modest growth in total annual awards but broader growth in the diversity of the award winners.

The awards spanned almost all aspects of the economy, from industrial buildings to commercial buildings to residential buildings to schools, and from manufacturers of HVAC equipment to manufacturers of electronic equipment, kitchen equipment and more.

The most awards – 56 - went to a group referred to by the EPA as Commercial Building Owners, Tenants, and Managers, which itself is a very diverse group including major retailers and major industrial companies, along with 10 educational institutions and 2 health care companies. These organizations won for their energy management programs. For example, *MetLife* achieved ENERGY STAR status at 32 of their properties while also Integrating the ENERGY STAR score into its due diligence process for evaluating new properties, promoting educational resources that leverage ENERGY STAR through its Green Impact initiative which engages approximately 10,000 MetLife employees, promoting the ENERGY STAR Tenant Space recognition to its tenants, conducting six ENERGY STAR Treasure Hunts to identify low- and no-cost energy savings measures, and hosting the sixth year of its EcoChallenge event, which is a two-week competition encouraging the adoption of eco-friendly habits.

The next largest group – 45 in total - was utilities, who were mostly awarded for the management of energy efficiency programs. An additional 9 of the 11 “Associations/Other Energy Efficiency Programs” awardees also received awards for management of energy efficiency programs. Again, this latter category is itself diverse, including *Fannie Mae*, *BOMA (Building Owners and Managers Association)*, the *Ohio Hospital Association*, and the *Portland Cement Association* among others.

The other large group - with 33 total companies - is listed as Product Design and Manufacturing. The largest subcategory of this group consists of electronics equipment manufacturers, as might be expected, representing 10 of the 33 companies. But the next largest group may be less expected – food equipment manufacturers, including *Welbilt*, *ITW*, and *Hoshizaki*. This is a group for which the number of awards has been growing as these companies continue to increase the energy efficiency of their

products, which include refrigeration equipment and much more. This has very positive implications for the transition to a cleaner energy future.

Other manufacturers with awards were in such areas as HVAC, lighting, water heating, and pool pumps, as well as windows and doors.

The groups listed above represent 145 of the 211 awardees. The remaining 66 fall under the following categories: Product Sales, Service & Product Providers, Industrial Plant Owners & Operators, New Home Builders, Home Energy Raters, and Contractors (the latter of which all deal with residential properties). Awardees were identified for specific accomplishments. For example:

- *Meritage Homes* constructed more than 9,000 ENERGY STAR certified homes in 2021, for a cumulative total of more than 87,500 homes since 2000; they also developed interactive customer tools that included information about ENERGY STAR certification and building practices.
- *Beazer Homes USA* constructed more than 5,300 ENERGY STAR certified homes in 2021, for a cumulative total of nearly 75,000 since joining the program in 2011; they also leveraged ENERGY STAR in the media to promote their commitment to energy efficiency and sustainability.
- *Bristol Myers Squibb* exceeded its 2020 sustainability goals by achieving a 24.3% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a 17.3% reduction in energy use from a 2015 baseline
- *Best Buy* improved the ability of its customers to easily identify products that have earned the ENERGY STAR mark, created a sustainable products dashboard that highlights ENERGY STAR products that offer an outsized cost and emissions savings potential, and delivered the ENERGY STAR message of greenhouse gas emission reductions and utility savings to its extensive customer base of 1.2 million followers on Twitter.

The majority of awardees – more than $\frac{3}{4}$ - were repeat winners – described as Partner of the Year, Sustained Excellence (and, in a few cases, Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Sustained Excellence). While a handful of these companies had received awards only once or twice before, the vast majority had received awards at least 5 times previously, and more than 30 had been awarded more than 10 times – up to 19 times (with the latter achieved by *Food Lion*). Multiple-time winners are spread across all of the award winner categories. It is encouraging to see that there are that many organizations that are clearly committed to energy reduction.

It is even more encouraging, though, to see that there are more than 50 organizations winning ENERGY STAR Awards for the first time. This group was also diverse, with 16 Commercial Building Owners, Tenants or Managers, 11 Utilities (representing 25% of all the utilities honored), 7 in Product Design & Manufacturing and 1 in Products Sales, 4 Industrial Plant Owners/Operators, 3 Service and Product Providers, and 2 each falling under the categories New Home Builders, Home Energy Raters, and Associations/Energy Efficiency Program Providers.

There is still a very long way to go to transition to a clean energy economy in the US, and the ENERGY STAR program plays a relatively small role in terms of all that must be accomplished. But it is great to see the continuing expanded commitment to ENERGY STAR goals across a broad swath of the US economy.