

# A Regional Energy Action Plan for Adams County

November 2025



**PARTNERS IN ENERGY**  
An Xcel Energy Community Collaboration

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the following individuals who contributed many hours of service to developing this Energy Action Plan.

The content of this plan is derived from a series of planning workshops hosted by Xcel Energy Partners in Energy. Xcel Energy is the main gas utility serving Adams County. Xcel Energy is also one of four electric utilities serving Adams County, covering the majority of premises in the County. Partners in Energy is a two-year collaboration to develop and implement a community’s energy goals. For more information about the planning workshops, see Appendix A: Xcel Energy’s Partners in Energy Planning Process.

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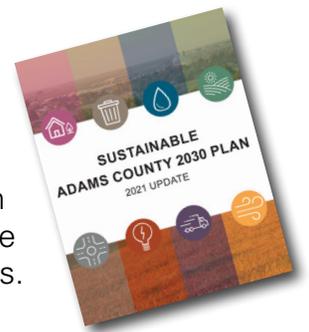
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# Adams County Regional Energy Action Plan Executive Summary

## About this Plan

This is the first regional **energy action plan** for Adams County, building on the 2021 Sustainability Plan, which emphasized the need for regional action to support energy efficiency, renewable energy, and beneficial electrification to create a more sustainable county. Because Adams County is a large and diverse community, this plan focuses on residents and small businesses in unincorporated areas, as well as large businesses across the county, to ensure the plan has custom and impactful strategies.



## Energy Vision and Goal

### Vision

Adams County envisions an energy future that is clean, affordable, and fair for all. By leading a regional approach grounded in equity, innovation, and sustainability, the County will meet people where they are to expand efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy to cut emissions, strengthen resilience, and lower costs.

### Goal

During the 18-month plan implementation period, Adams County will increase demand side management (DSM) and renewable energy program participation rates in its residential sector from 4.4% to 5% and commercial sector from 5.4% to 6%. In turn, this will increase county-wide energy savings, greenhouse gas emissions savings, and renewable electricity usage by 12% over baseline (2021-2023 average).

## Focus Areas and Strategies

### Focus Area: Unincorporated Residential

- **R-1:** Establish foundational understanding of energy efficiency and beneficial electrification.
- **R-2:** Conduct a campaign to encourage residents to implement Home Energy Squad recommendations.
- **R-3:** Expand upon renewable energy campaign.

### Focus Area: Unincorporated Small Business

- **B-1:** Conduct a small business energy assessment campaign.
- **B-2:** Conduct a campaign to encourage businesses to implement energy audit recommendations and promote renewable energy programs.
- **B-3:** Implement the small business energy efficiency and sustainability audits through participation in the Colorado Green Business Network.
- **B-4:** Explore local incentive options that can stack with existing utility program incentives.

### Focus Area: Regional Large Businesses and Institutions

- **L-1:** Launch a regional campaign targeting large businesses, institutions, and chains to promote participation in energy efficiency and renewable energy.



# Energy Baseline: 2023

**3,015,245,000 kWh**  
Electricity Usage

**234,226,000 therms**  
Natural Gas Usage

**43.7 million kWh**  
of Renewable Electricity

**2,502,000 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e**  
GHG Emissions

**\$517,618,000**  
Spent on energy costs

## Impact and Results of Plan Implementation

By executing our plan strategies over the 18-month implementation period, we can expect to see an incremental impact that:

- Saves 3,324,000 kWh of electricity and 49,000 therms of natural gas
- Increases renewable electricity use by 1,870,000 kWh (6,400 MMBtu)
- Avoids 1,750 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e of GHG emissions
- Saves \$324,000 in energy costs

Estimated Energy Action Plan Impact

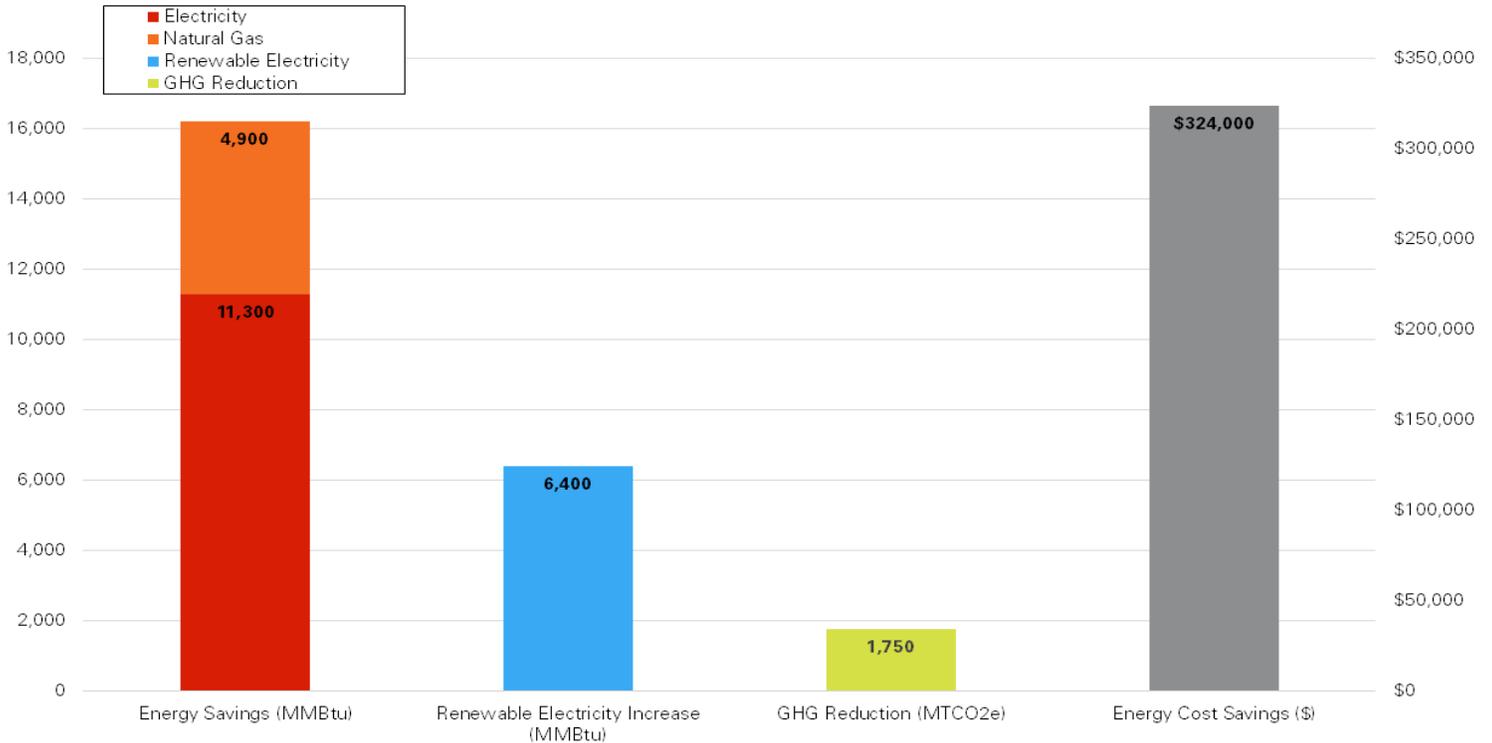


Figure 1: Estimated impact of the Energy Action Plan on Adams County's energy profile over the 18-month implementation period.

# INTRODUCTION



Adams County is located on the northeastern side of the Denver metro region and encompasses ten incorporated municipalities, including Brighton, Commerce City, Federal Heights, Northglenn, Thornton, and portions of Arvada, Aurora, Bennett, Lochbuie, and Westminster. The county is also home to unincorporated communities such as Henderson, Strasburg, and Watkins. It's a large and diverse county, with variations in population, housing, and infrastructure that shape energy needs and opportunities. The 2021 Sustainability Plan emphasized the need for regional action to support energy efficiency, renewable energy, and beneficial electrification to create a more sustainable county. Adams County participated in Partners in Energy previously, developing and implementing an Energy Action Plan focused on municipal facilities; the County is leading by example and is now ready to bring the community along.

## About This Plan

This Energy Action Plan is a roadmap to strategically guide Adams County's action in a manner that supports the community's emissions reductions and energy savings goals.

The goals and strategies outlined in this plan were developed collaboratively with a group of stakeholders, referred to as the Energy Action Team, through three planning workshops conducted between June and October of 2025. The Energy Action Team included representatives from local municipal governments, utilities serving Adams County, and representatives from Adams County Government (see Acknowledgements for a full list of participants).

Adams County joined more than 40 other Colorado communities that have developed EV and Energy Action Plans through Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy, an offering that provides resources for community energy planning. Partners in Energy also supports 18 months of plan implementation in the form of marketing and communications, data tracking and analysis, program expertise, and project management.

# WHERE WE ARE NOW



An integral part of the Partners in Energy planning process is reviewing historic demographic and energy data that informs our community's energy baseline. The data in these sections comes from national sources like the U.S. Census Bureau, which offers Countywide demographic data, as well as local energy data from Xcel Energy.

## Community Demographics

Adams County spans approximately 1,170 square miles and is home to 519,600 residents across 186,500 households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). The population is projected to grow rapidly, increasing to 722,800 by 2040 (Adams County, 2022). The county expects to see significant household and small business growth over the next two decades in unincorporated areas, as the Denver metro region continues to grow and residents needing more affordable housing look outside of incorporated areas (Adams County, 2022).

Adams County's population is diverse, which has implications for program outreach. Nearly 29% of residents speak a language other than English at home, with Spanish being the most common at 24% (U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023). Understanding cultural demographics allows us to navigate language barriers.

Income and housing are key for energy planning. The median household for Adams County income is \$97,700 (U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce., 2023), and the average household energy burden is roughly 2% (U.S. Department of Energy, Office of State and Community Energy Programs, 2022), which is comparable to the state average. Housing affordability remains a concern; approximately 36% of households are cost-burdened, spending 30% or more of income on housing, with renters disproportionately affected (56% of renter households vs. 28% of owners) (U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023).

Housing stock is varied; 192,700 housing units existed countywide in 2023, with 68% being owner-occupied and 32% renter-occupied (U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023). Forty nine percent of housing units were built before 2000; and since then have improved significantly which is an opportunity to promote energy efficiency programs to promote energy savings for older homes (U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023). The median housing value is \$512,100,

and the median gross rent is \$1,800, which also shows opportunities for energy savings, since these costs are higher than the national average (ibid).

These factors influence program design, particularly for targeted outreach in unincorporated areas. Understanding the communities we intend to reach helps ensure that engagement efforts are responsive and accessible. This includes identifying where language access may be needed and translating materials accordingly. Demographic and housing characteristics also help determine which programs are most relevant to each community, recognizing that no two areas face the same circumstances. Residents and small businesses in unincorporated Adams County may have distinct needs and challenges, such as being served by multiple utility providers, which can influence program eligibility and access to resources.

## Energy Use and Savings

Adams County receives electricity from four utility providers: Xcel Energy, United Power, CORE, and Morgan Rural Electric Association. Xcel Energy provides all natural gas service to the county and is estimated to provide 85-90% of the county's electric energy needs based on the number of premises served by all electric utilities in the county. This plan only includes energy usage data from Xcel Energy. Energy data provided by the other three utilities is not included or analyzed within this plan. Any mention of energy-related metrics is solely associated with the energy provided by Xcel Energy.

The following sections outline the key baseline energy data that informed the focus areas and strategies in this Plan. For additional baseline energy data, see Appendix C: Baseline Energy Data.

### Premises and Grid Energy Use

Approximately 90% of premises in Adams County are residential while 10% are commercial and industrial (CI). While the vast majority of premises are residential, total energy use in the CI sector is close to equal to that of the residential sector, showing far more energy use per premise. Because of this high energy use, the CI sector has significant opportunities for energy savings.

Note that a "premise" is not equivalent to a "customer". For example, a single premise may be occupied by more than one customer within a single building or property. Alternatively, a single building, like a condominium, may have multiple premises.

While there are 206,000 total premises in Adams County, there are 30,000 residential premises and 5,100 commercial and industrial premises in unincorporated Adams County. These unincorporated premise counts were used to develop the goals and targets for the strategies focused on unincorporated Adams County.

### Energy Cost Burden and Savings

Since CI premises have a higher average energy use per premise than residential premises, energy costs per premise are also higher in the CI sector than the residential sector. By focusing efforts on energy efficiency programs for CI premises, the county can see bigger energy savings overall.

While CI premises do consume significantly more energy and therefore have more costs, limiting energy cost burden for residents is also a priority; an average residential premise in Adams County spends \$1,260 on energy costs annually. By connecting residents with energy saving programs, this plan's implementation can help address energy cost burden.

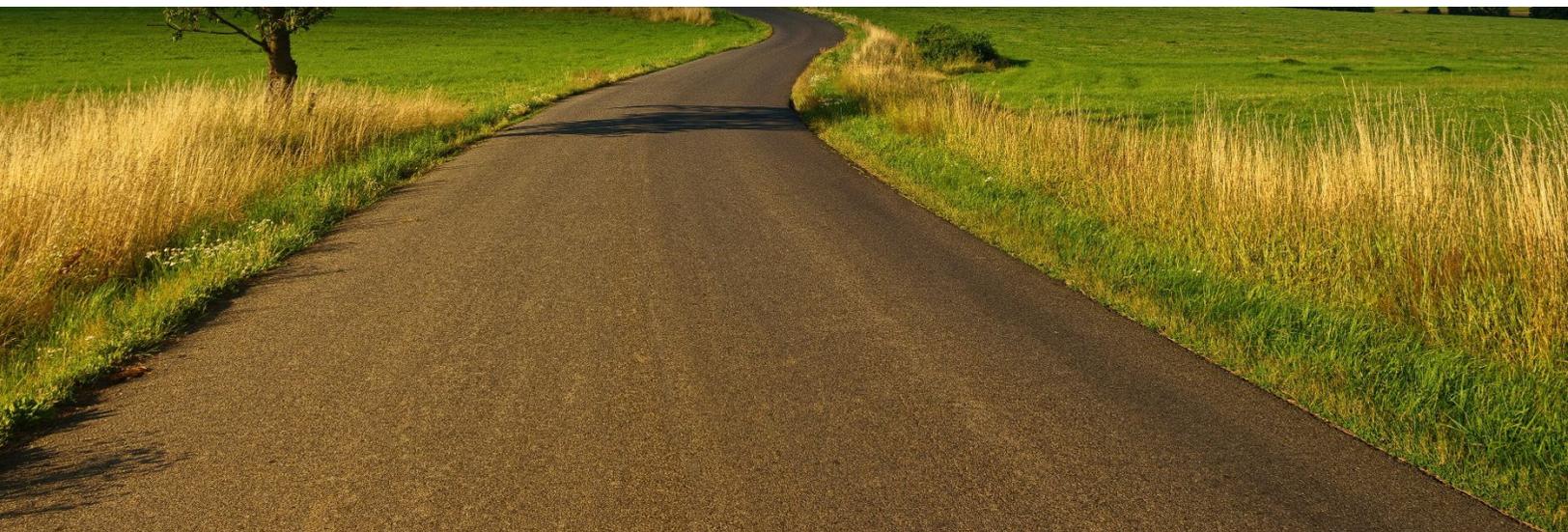
### Program Participation

Since energy and greenhouse gas emissions savings come from program participation, understanding baseline participation by sector in the county is vital to setting realistic targets for this plan.

Statewide, residential Xcel Energy program participation rates range from about 3% to 6% (i.e. 3% to 6% of residential premises participate in an energy efficiency program yearly) with a median participation rate of 5%. Comparatively, Adams County's median residential participation rate from 2021-2023 was 4.4%; 0.6% lower than the statewide median.

Commercial participation rates throughout the state range from about 1% to 7% with a median participation rate of 5.3%. Comparatively, Adams County's median commercial participation rate from 2021 to 2023 was 5.4%; 0.1% higher than the statewide median.

This plan uses these participation rates to calculate realistic targets for each focus area and strategy. The Energy Action Team chose to be conservative in their goal and target setting in order to promote additional program participation over the baseline, while also being realistic and cognizant of issues residents and businesses are facing, like inflationary pressures.



## WHERE WE ARE GOING

### Energy Vision

During the planning process, the Energy Action Team created a vision statement for this Energy Action Plan.

This statement guided the planning process and reflects the intention of the community.

Adams County envisions an energy future that is clean, affordable, and fair for all. By leading a regional approach grounded in equity, innovation, and sustainability, the County will meet people where they are to expand efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy to cut emissions, strengthen resilience, and lower costs.

### Goals

During the 18-month plan implementation period, Adams County will increase demand side management (DSM) and renewable energy program participation rates in its residential sector from 4.4% to 5% and commercial sector from 5.4% to 6%. In turn, this will increase county-wide energy savings, GHG savings, and renewable electricity usage by 12% over baseline (2021-2023 average).

### Focus Areas

The Energy Action Team identified three focus areas to prioritize strategies and resources. The Regional focus area was prioritized since large business is a sector where regional partners in the county have struggled to engage on an individual community level. By collaborating with the other municipalities in the county, the team believes that large businesses will be more willing to take energy action. The Unincorporated focus areas were prioritized since so many municipalities in Adams County had already participated in Partners in Energy and have taken action to improve participation in residential and small business programs in order to help these community members save energy. Unincorporated residents and small businesses have not received the same level of communication about DSM programs yet, so encouraging participation to help them decrease energy use was identified as a priority.

- Focus Area: **Unincorporated Residential**
  - Strategy R-1: Establish a foundational understanding of energy efficiency and electrification.
  - Strategy R-2: Conduct a campaign to encourage residents to implement Home Energy Squad recommendations.
  - Strategy R-3: Expand upon renewable energy campaigns.
- Focus Area: **Unincorporated Small Business**
  - Strategy B-1: Conduct a small business energy assessment campaign.
  - Strategy B-2: Conduct a campaign to encourage businesses to implement energy audit recommendations.
  - Strategy B-3: Implement the Small Business Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Audits through participation in the Colorado Green Business Network.
  - Strategy B-4: Explore local incentive options that can stack with existing utility program incentives and promote existing Switch Together group buy program.
- Focus Area: **Regional Large Businesses and Institutions**
  - Strategy L-1: Launch a regional campaign targeting large businesses, institutions, and chains to promote participation in energy efficiency and renewable energy programs across jurisdictions.

## Estimated Impact

By achieving the targets for each of these strategies, it is estimated that the plan will have the following impact on Adams County's energy<sup>1</sup> profile over the 18-month implementation period:

- Save 3,324,000 kWh (11,300 MMBtu) of electricity and 49,000 therms (4,900 MMBtu) of natural gas.
- Increase renewable energy use by 1,870,000 kWh (6,400 MMBtu).
- Avoid 1,750 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e GHG emissions.
- Save \$324,000 in energy costs.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that only Xcel Energy data is included in the estimated impact.

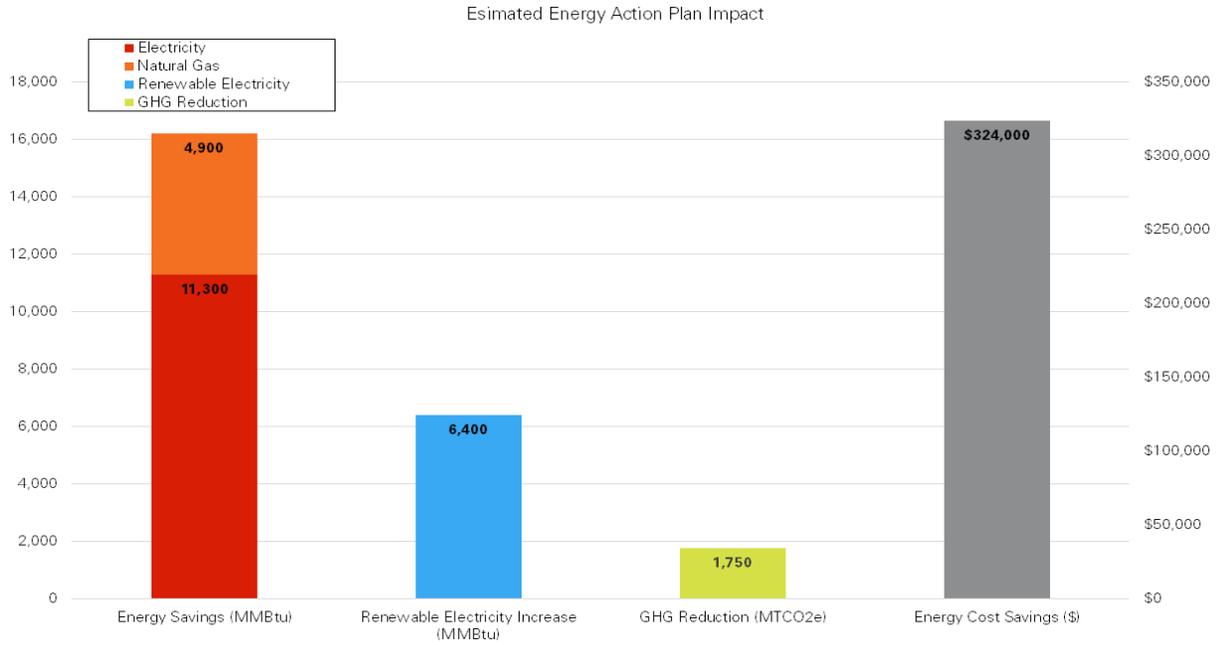


Figure 2. Estimated impact of the Energy Action Plan on Adams County's energy profile over the 18-month implementation period

# HOW WE ARE GOING TO GET THERE



To achieve the community's energy vision and goal, the Energy Action Team identified a set of strategies to support plan implementation. The following sections organize strategies by focus area and include baseline information, desired outcomes, timelines, and implementation roles. For additional details on implementation, see Appendix E.

## Focus Area: Unincorporated Residential

### Strategy R-1: Establish a foundational understanding of energy efficiency and electrification.

<b>Strategy Piece</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>Description and Context</b>	To take energy action, residents need to know the benefits and how to take the first step. This strategy outlines the campaign that will combine educating residents on the benefits of energy efficiency with promotion of Xcel Energy's Home Energy Squad, so that they can understand the best energy action steps to take for their own home.
<b>Target Outcomes</b>	Conduct energy audits for an additional 270 residents.
<b>Timeline</b>	January-September 2026.
<b>Implementation Lead</b>	Adams County staff (Facilities and Community and Economic Development (CED)).
<b>Implementation Support</b>	Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communications</li><li>• Office of Strategic Partnerships &amp; Resilient Communities (SPARC)</li><li>• Office of Emergency Management (OEM)</li><li>• Minor Home Repair team</li></ul> External <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partners in Energy</li><li>• Home Energy Squad implementor</li></ul>

### Strategy R-2: Conduct a campaign to encourage residents to implement Home Energy Squad recommendations.

<b>Strategy Piece</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>Description and Context</b>	Once residents have recommendations from Home Energy Squad on what upgrades to make to their homes, they need to take action! Encouragement from the County and Home Energy Squad, as well as information about utility incentives, can motivate residents to take action to see real energy savings.
<b>Target Outcomes</b>	Additional 270 residents participate in utility DSM programs.
<b>Timeline</b>	July 2026-June 2027.
<b>Implementation Lead</b>	Adams County staff (Facilities and CED).
<b>Implementation Support</b>	Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communications</li><li>• SPARC</li></ul> External <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partners in Energy</li><li>• Xcel Energy Home Energy Squad implementor</li><li>• DRCOG's Power Ahead Colorado program</li></ul>

**Strategy R-3: Expand upon renewable energy campaign.**

<b>Strategy Piece Description and Context</b>	<b>Detail</b> This campaign will encourage renewable energy adoption, lower energy costs, decrease emissions and build upon the County's existing Switch Together group-buy program for solar, battery storage, and heat pumps.
<b>Target Outcomes</b>	Additional 160 residents participate in Xcel Energy renewable energy programs <sup>2</sup> .
<b>Timeline</b>	July 2026-June 2027.
<b>Implementation Lead</b>	Adams County staff (Facilities and CED).
<b>Implementation Support</b>	Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communications</li><li>• SPARC</li><li>• OEM</li></ul> External <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partners in Energy</li></ul>

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<sup>2</sup> Programs include but are not limited to Net Metering, Solar\*Rewards, and Renewable\*Connect Flex.

## Focus Area: Unincorporated Small Business

### Strategy B-1: Conduct a small business energy assessment campaign.

<b>Strategy Piece</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>Description and Context</b>	<p>Conduct a campaign to educate small businesses on energy efficiency and conduct energy assessments.</p> <p>This strategy will help the Energy Action Team understand the receptiveness of businesses to learn and act, help businesses identify cost savings through program participation, build awareness, and identify funding sources.</p>
<b>Target Outcomes</b>	Conduct 60 small business energy assessments.
<b>Timeline</b>	May-November 2026
<b>Implementation Lead</b>	Adams County staff (Facilities and CED).
<b>Implementation Support</b>	Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communications</li></ul> External <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partners in Energy</li><li>• Xcel Energy Small Business Solutions implementor</li></ul>

**Strategy B-2: Conduct a campaign to encourage businesses to implement energy audit recommendations and promote renewable energy programs.**

<b>Strategy Piece</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>Description and Context</b>	Once businesses have recommendations from Small Business Solutions on what upgrades to make to their business, they need to make those recommendations! Encouragement and reminders from the County and Small Business Solutions team can encourage businesses to take action to see real energy savings via energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.
<b>Target Outcomes</b>	40 additional businesses participate in commercial DSM offerings, like HVAC-R or Lighting Efficiency. 20 additional businesses participate in renewable programs.
<b>Timeline</b>	January 2027-June 2027.
<b>Implementation Lead</b>	Adams County staff (Facilities and CED).
<b>Implementation Support</b>	Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications</li> </ul> External <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners in Energy</li> <li>• Xcel Energy Small Business Solutions implementor<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>

**Strategy B-3: Implement the small business energy efficiency and sustainability audits through participation in the Colorado Green Business Network.**

<b>Strategy Piece</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>Description and Context</b>	As a regional partner of the Colorado Green Business Network, County staff will promote the program to businesses.
<b>Target Outcomes</b>	Support small businesses in their identification and implementation of energy efficiency and sustainability improvements.
<b>Timeline</b>	May 2026-June 2027 (position is funded through October 2029).
<b>Implementation Lead</b>	Adams County staff (Facilities and CED), specifically the new energy-focused position in CED.
<b>Implementation Support</b>	Colorado Green Business Network

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<sup>3</sup> Small Business Solutions is a program from Xcel Energy. The implementor of this program will be a key partner in conducting business walks and ensuring businesses receive their energy audits.

**Strategy B-4: Explore local incentive options that can stack with existing utility program incentives.**

<b>Strategy Piece</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>Description and Context</b>	For many small businesses, having the capital upfront to make energy improvements to realize energy savings later can be a challenge. By determining the options available to Adams County to offer local incentives, the County could choose to pursue opportunities to assist small businesses with that upfront cost.
<b>Target Outcomes</b>	Understand what is needed for Adams County to provide incentives, including amounts, program examples from peer communities, and funding sources.
<b>Timeline</b>	July-December 2026.
<b>Implementation Lead</b>	Adams County staff (Facilities and CED).
<b>Implementation Support</b>	Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance Department</li> </ul> External <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners in Energy</li> </ul>

**Focus Area: Regional Large Business**

**Strategy L-1: Launch a regional campaign targeting large businesses, institutions, and chains to promote participation in energy efficiency and renewable energy programs across jurisdictions.**

<b>Strategy Piece</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>Description and Context</b>	This campaign will allow municipalities across the county to work together to reach a historically difficult to reach audience: large businesses, institutions, and chains. By collaborating on this effort, the regional cohort will aim to see more action taken by these large entities than has been achieved at the individual community level.
<b>Target Outcomes</b>	50 participants in DSM programs. 20 participants in renewable energy programs.
<b>Timeline</b>	January 2026-June 2027.
<b>Implementation Lead</b>	Adams County and Municipalities.
<b>Implementation Support</b>	Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CED</li> </ul> External <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities and their local economic development partners</li> <li>• Utility account managers</li> <li>• Partners in Energy</li> </ul>

# HOW WE STAY ON COURSE



## Adapting to a Changing Landscape

This Energy Action Plan is a living document that is cyclical in nature (Figure 3). Goals and strategies will be assessed and refined as needed based on data and community staff capacity.

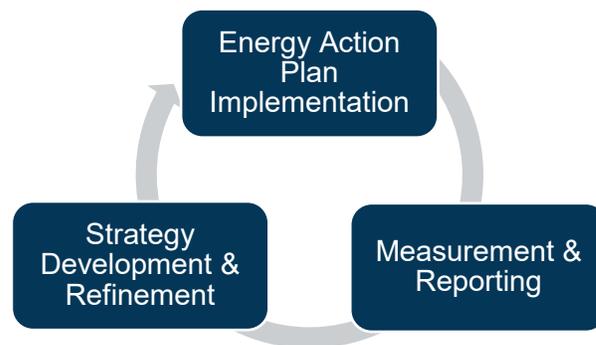


Figure 3: Cycle of Implementation, Measurement and Reporting, and Strategy Development

Evaluating and updating strategies throughout implementation to reflect advancements in technology and new offerings from government entities and utilities in Adams County will be vital to the success of this plan, such as new programs from DRCOG’s Power Ahead Colorado and the Colorado Energy Office. Both entities expect to roll out new residential energy programs during the implementation of this plan, and promoting these additional programs can help further support the goals of this plan. Throughout the planning process, we worked to build relationships between County staff and Xcel Energy staff that will foster the collaboration and cooperation required to successfully navigate the changing energy landscape.

## Project Management and Tracking Progress

Partners in Energy will host regular project management check-in calls with staff and partners to ensure we stay on course to achieve our strategies. Biweekly meetings with County staff will occur, including representatives from CED and Facilities in each meeting, and bringing staff who work directly with

residents and businesses into meetings as appropriate. Regional partners will also meet monthly to advance the Large Business strategy. Table 1 outlines the timeline for each strategy.

Table 1. Focus Area Strategies and Implementation Timeline

Strategies by Focus Area	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	Q1 2027	Q2 2027
<b>Strategy R-1:</b> Establish a foundational understanding of energy efficiency and electrification.						
<b>Strategy R-2:</b> Conduct a campaign to encourage residents to implement Home Energy Squad recommendations.						
<b>Strategy R-3:</b> Expand upon renewable energy campaign.						
<b>Strategy B-1:</b> Conduct a small business energy assessment campaign.						
<b>Strategy B-2:</b> Conduct a campaign to encourage businesses to implement energy audit recommendations and promote renewable energy programs.						
<b>Strategy B-3:</b> Implement the small business energy efficiency and sustainability audits through participation in the Colorado Green Business Network.						
<b>Strategy B-4:</b> Explore local incentive options that can stack with existing utility program incentives.						
<b>Strategy L-1:</b> Launch a regional campaign targeting large businesses, institutions, and chains to promote participation in energy efficiency and renewable energy programs across jurisdictions.						

To ensure this plan remains on track, the Energy Action Team will track metrics by the focus areas outlined in Table 2 to review progress toward stated goals and targets on an annual basis and to assess whether the efforts appear to be making an impact.

Table 2: Goals and Targets by Focus Area

Focus Area	Goal/Target	Baseline value
Unincorporated Residential	5.0% annual program participation rate	4.4%
Unincorporated Small Business	6.0% annual program participation rate	5.4%
Regional Large Business	6.0% annual program participation rate	5.4%

Partners in Energy will provide biannual progress reports with metrics of success and overall progress toward goals for Xcel Energy rebates and programs. These reports will be available publicly and shared with both the community and Energy Action Team. If available, ad-hoc participation reports for specific Xcel Energy programs can be provided to measure the success of campaigns and determine if we need to change our course.

It will be important to let the wider community know how things are progressing and to recognize the collaborative efforts of those involved in hitting the plan targets. At critical milestones, Adams County will publish updates on progress, share successes, and congratulate participants and partners.



## APPENDIX A: XCEL ENERGY'S PARTNERS IN ENERGY PLANNING PROCESS

### About Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy

Xcel Energy is an electric and natural gas utility that provides the energy that powers millions of homes and businesses across eight Western and Midwestern states. Each community Xcel Energy serves has its own unique priorities and vision for its energy future. The energy landscape is dynamically changing with communities leading the way in setting energy and sustainability goals. To continue to innovatively support their communities, Xcel Energy launched Partners in Energy in the summer of 2014 as a collaborative resource with tailored services to complement each community's vision. The program offerings include support to develop an energy action plan, electric vehicle plan, or beneficial electrification plan, tools to help implement the plan and deliver results, and resources designed to help each community stay informed and achieve their outlined goals.

### Plan Development Process

The content of this plan is derived from a series of planning workshops held in the community with a planning team committed to representing local energy priorities and implementing plan strategies. The three-workshop series in this planning process were used to bring together local priorities to ensure regional alignment.

A kickoff meeting was held in January 2025 to provide an overview of the planning process and help identify the County's preliminary priorities to inform plan development. During this meeting, team roles and responsibilities were confirmed. The planning team included Partners in Energy facilitators, Xcel Energy representatives, and Adams County staff.

The first community planning workshop, held in June 2025, brought together representatives from Adams County and its municipalities to build a shared understanding of regional energy use and existing efforts across the county. Participants reviewed community baseline data to better understand current energy usage and discussed ongoing and planned regional efforts.

Because Adams County and each municipality have independent sustainability goals, participants expressed interest in collaborating to identify gaps between municipal and County plans and to avoid duplicating efforts. Together, attendees developed a draft shared energy vision, identified initial focus

areas, and selected metrics to track progress toward Energy Action Plan goals, which helped inform the development of draft strategies.

In Workshop 2, participants finalized the draft energy vision to guide future work, confirmed focus areas, and conducted a goal-setting exercise using program participation data to understand targets and the staff resources required to achieve them. The workshop also included a strategy development session, during which participants provided input on each strategy to help inform its implementation.

Workshop 3 consisted of three in-person meetings and one online session, each targeting a specific focus area: unincorporated residential, unincorporated small businesses, and regional large businesses. Additional Adams County staff from the Communications Department, Office of Strategic Partnerships & Resilient Communities, and Community & Economic Development Department were invited to inform strategies for the unincorporated focus areas. Representatives from other utilities serving Adams County, including CORE Electric Cooperative, United Power, and Morgan County Rural Electric Association were also invited. A representative from United Power attended the regional large business meeting.

Each meeting provided an opportunity for the participants, including municipalities and utilities, to review specific strategies and share how they could support implementation. The online session offered regional stakeholders who were unable to attend in-person a chance to contribute input on strategies, particularly those focused on large businesses.

## **Plan Implementation**

Partners in Energy provides 18 months of support for implementation of an Energy Action Plan. This support is designed to supplement both technical analysis and support available through Xcel Energy's other offerings.

Throughout the plan, strategies that will be supported by Partners in Energy are identified, and a Memorandum of Understanding will be developed between Xcel Energy and Adams County to outline the scope of support.



## APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**British Thermal Unit (BTU):** the amount of heat needed to raise one pound of water at maximum density through one degree Fahrenheit.

**Carbon-free:** Carbon-free refers to sources of energy that will not emit additional carbon dioxide into the air. Wind, solar and nuclear energy are all carbon-free sources but only wind and solar are renewable.

**Demand Side Management (DSM):** Modification of consumer demand for energy through various methods, including education and financial incentives. DSM aims to encourage consumers to decrease energy consumption, especially during peak hours, or to shift time-of-energy use to off-peak periods such as nighttime and weekend.

**Energy Burden:** Percentage of gross household income spent on energy costs.

**Energy Savings:** Comes from a permanent change that results in using less energy to achieve the same results. A new furnace uses X% less energy to keep your home at the same temperature (all things being equal), resulting in energy *savings* of X%. For accounting purposes, energy savings are only counted in the year the new equipment is installed.

**Greenhouse Gases (GHG):** Gases in the atmosphere that absorb and emit radiation and significantly contribute to climate change. The primary greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone.

**Kilowatt-hour (kWh):** A unit of electricity consumption.

**Million British Thermal Units (MMBtu):** A unit of energy consumption that allows electricity and natural gas consumption to be combined.

**Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (MTCO<sub>2</sub>e):** A unit of measure for greenhouse gas emissions. The unit "CO<sub>2</sub>e" represents an amount of a greenhouse gas whose atmospheric impact has been standardized to that of one unit mass of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), based on the global warming potential (GWP) of the gas.

**Megawatt (MW):** A unit of electric power equal to 1 million watts.

**Premise:** A unique combination of service address and meter. For residential customers, this is the equivalent of an individual house or dwelling unit in a multi-tenant building. For business customers, it is an individual business, or for a larger business, a separately metered portion of the business's load at that address.

**Therm (thm or therm):** A unit of natural gas consumption.

# APPENDIX C: BASELINE ENERGY DATA

## Premises

Approximately 90% of premises in Adams County are residential while 10% are commercial and industrial (CI). Between 2021 and 2023, premise counts grew by 1.8% overall. Premise growth rate closely parallels the county’s population growth rate of 2.1% over these same years (US Census Bureau, 2023). There was a 2.2% increase in the residential sector and a 1.5% decrease in the CI sector. Figure 4 shows the premise count trends during these years.

Note that a “premise” is not equivalent to a “customer”. For example, a single premise may be occupied by more than one customer within a single building or property. Alternatively, a single building, like a condominium, may have multiple premises.

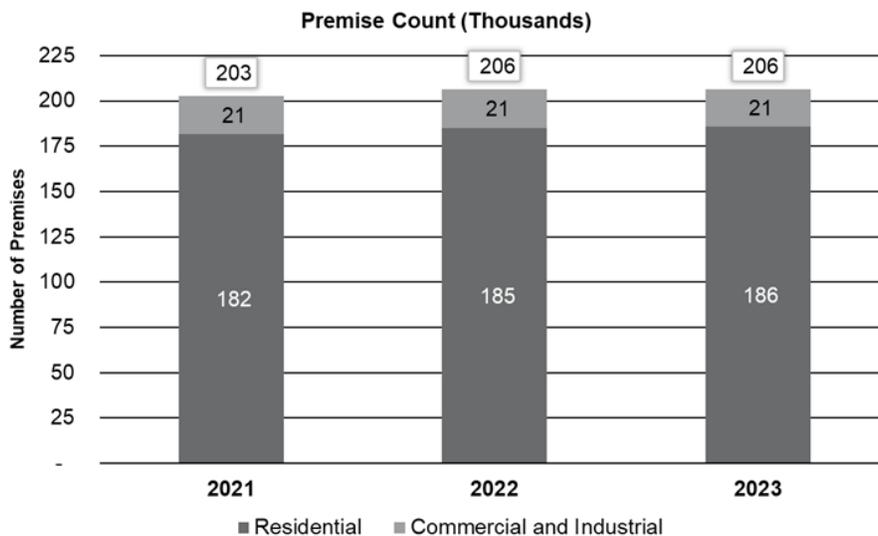


Figure 4. Residential and CI premises (2021-2023)

## Grid Energy Use

Figure 5 shows energy consumption from 2021-2023 in the residential and CI sectors. Comparing Figure 4’s increase in residential premise count to the residential energy consumption shown in Figure 5, one sees that residential premise count grew 2.2% while energy consumption remained relatively constant with only a 0.3% decrease. This trend indicates a few potential scenarios:

- New homes may be more energy efficient than older homes.
- Residents may be improving older home efficiency.
- Residents may be improving their personal energy use practices.
- Residents may be reducing their grid-electricity dependence (e.g., via solar electricity generation).

Comparing the commercial premise count in Figure 4 to the commercial energy consumption in Figure 5, one can see that CI premise counts decreased by 1.5% while energy use increased by 0.5%. The

increase in energy use, despite a decrease in premise count, may indicate an energy efficiency opportunity in the CI sector.

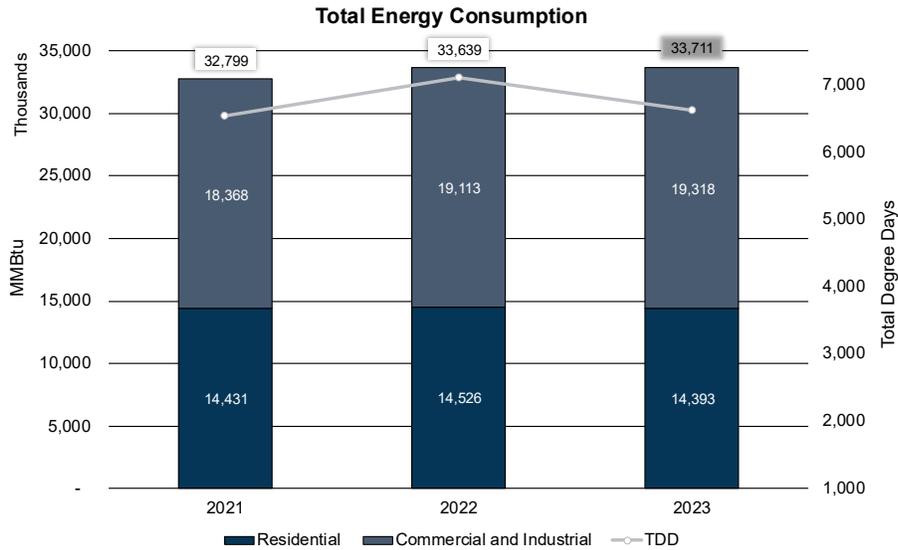


Figure 5. Residential and CI total energy use

### Energy Costs and Energy Burden

Adams County’s energy costs increased by about \$102 million from 2021 to 2023 (Figure 6). Energy costs in 2023 were comparable to those in 2022.

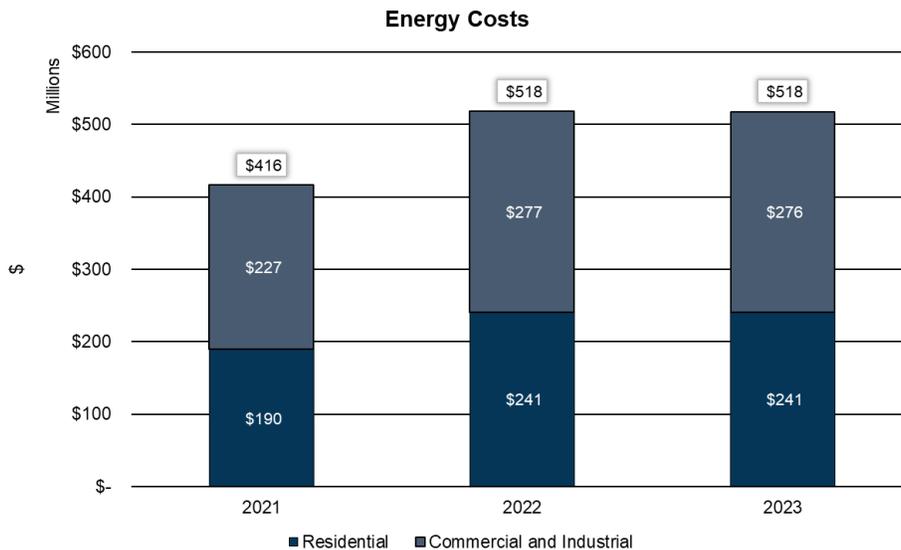


Figure 6: Energy costs by year for the residential and CI sectors

In 2023, Adams County spent a total of \$518 million on energy. The energy cost was distributed relatively evenly between the residential sector (\$241 million, 47%) and the CI sector (\$276 million, 53%). As shown in Figure 7, energy costs break down to an annual average of \$1,260 per residential

premise and \$13,300 per commercial premise. It should be noted that residential energy usage and costs are typically comparable from premise to premise while commercial business energy needs can vary greatly from premise to premise as dictated by the business’s size and type.

Residential Energy		Commercial Energy	
<b>\$1,260</b>	Annual spend on energy for a typical home	<b>\$13,300</b>	Annual spend on energy for a typical business
<b>5,400 kWh</b>	Annual electricity use for a typical home	<b>97,000 kWh</b>	Annual electricity use for a typical business
<b>600 therms</b>	Annual natural gas use for a typical home	<b>6,000 therms</b>	Annual natural gas use for a typical business

Figure 7. 2023 average residential and commercial premise energy costs and use

Going one layer deeper, Figure 8 breaks out how much the average residential and CI premises spend on electricity and natural gas annually. About 58% of residential energy costs are for electricity and 42% for natural gas. About 77% of CI energy costs are for electricity and 23% for natural gas.

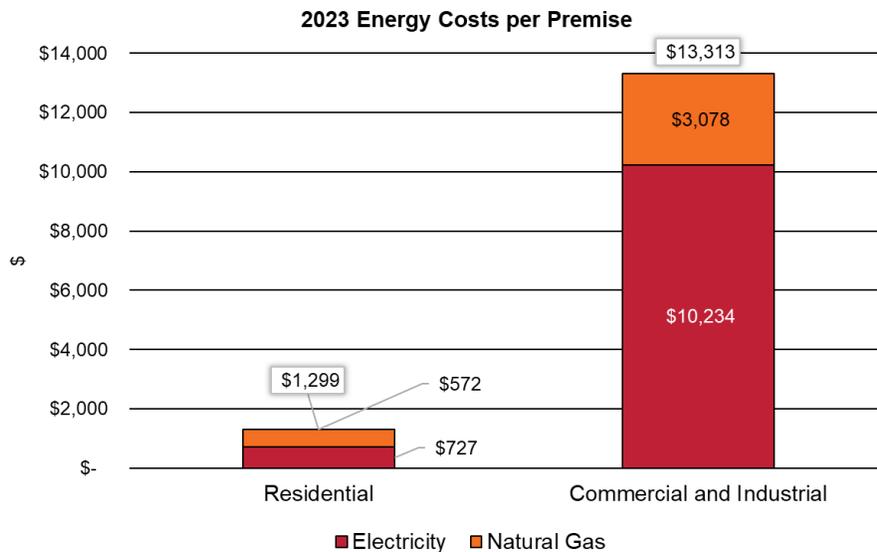


Figure 8. Breakout of annual electricity and natural gas costs per premise

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Since 2021, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced from electricity and natural gas consumption in Adams County homes and businesses have been decreasing even though energy use has gone up (Figure 9).

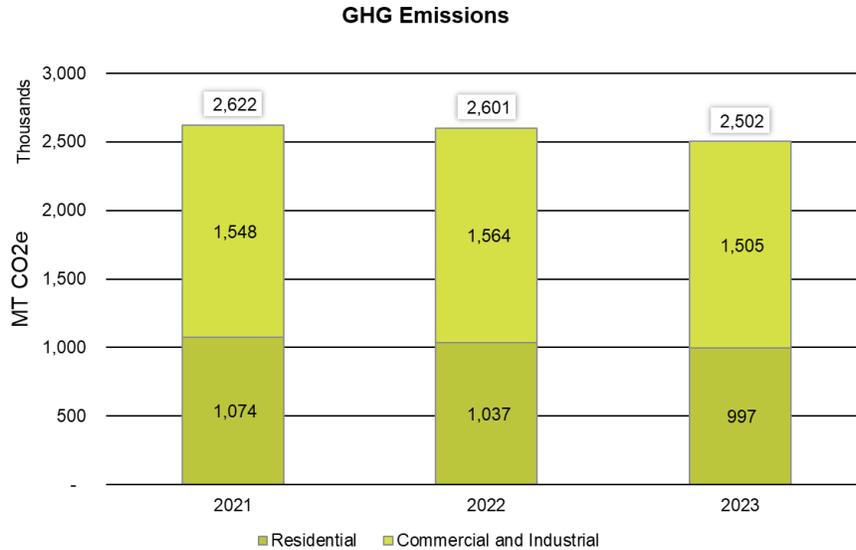


Figure 9. Historic GHG emissions from residential and CI premise energy consumption

The reason GHG emissions are decreasing, despite the steady increase in total energy consumption, is primarily driven by Xcel Energy’s efforts to increase the use of clean energy sources within their grid. Xcel Energy has a goal to provide 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050 (Figure 10) and is steadily changing the way it produces electricity to ensure that more of the electricity it provides is produced by renewable and carbon-free sources. In turn, fewer carbon emissions are produced for every kWh of electricity provided by Xcel Energy.



Figure 10. Xcel Energy's goal for carbon-free electricity

## Renewable Energy

Renewable energy use is increasing in Adams County. From 2021 to 2023, total renewable program participation increased by 18% which drove a 22% increase in total renewable energy savings (Figure 11).

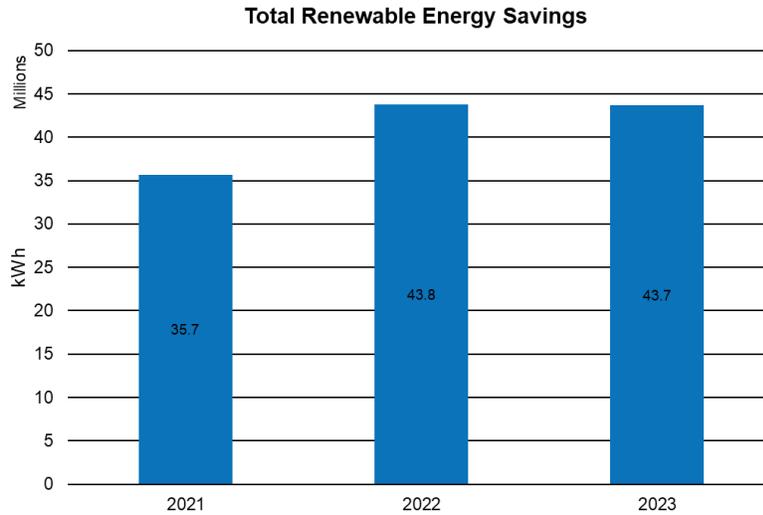


Figure 11. County-wide total renewable energy savings

## Energy Efficiency Program Participation & Savings

Energy efficiency program participation in the residential sector steadily increased from 2021 to 2023 with an annual average of 8,114 participants. CI sector participation has fluctuated but remained steady with an annual average of 1,139 participants (Figure 12).

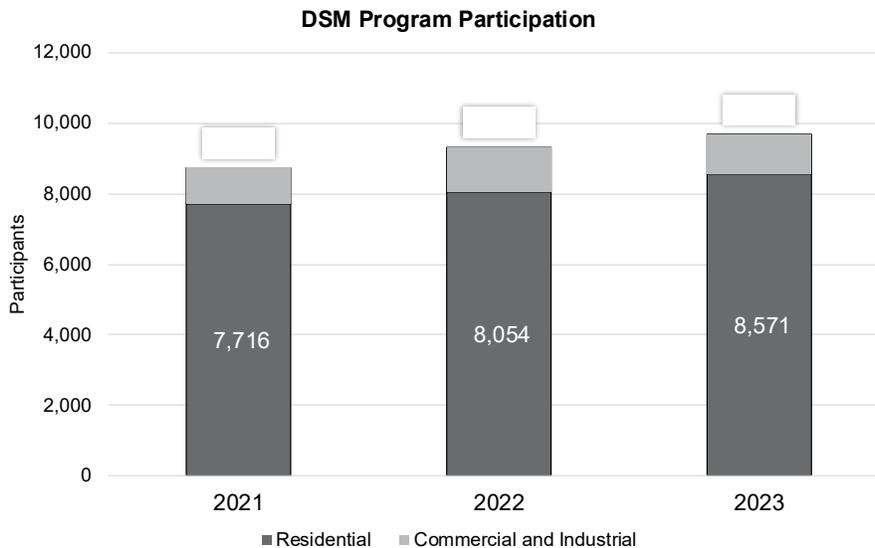


Figure 12: Average energy efficiency program participation

Participation has resulted in natural gas and electricity savings for both sectors. Savings do not often scale directly with participation since not all programs, and not all participation presents equivalent savings potential. Figure 13 illustrates how energy savings have varied across the 2021-2023 baseline years.

Statewide, residential program participation rates range from about 3% to 6% (i.e., 3% to 6% of residential premises participate in an energy efficiency program yearly) with a median participation rate of 5%. Comparatively, Adams County’s median residential participation rate from 2021-2023 was 4.4%, 0.6% lower than the statewide median.

Commercial participation rates throughout the state range from about 1% to 7% with a median participation rate of 5.3%. Comparatively, Adams County’s median commercial participation rate from 2021 to 2023 was 5.4%, 0.1% higher than the statewide median.

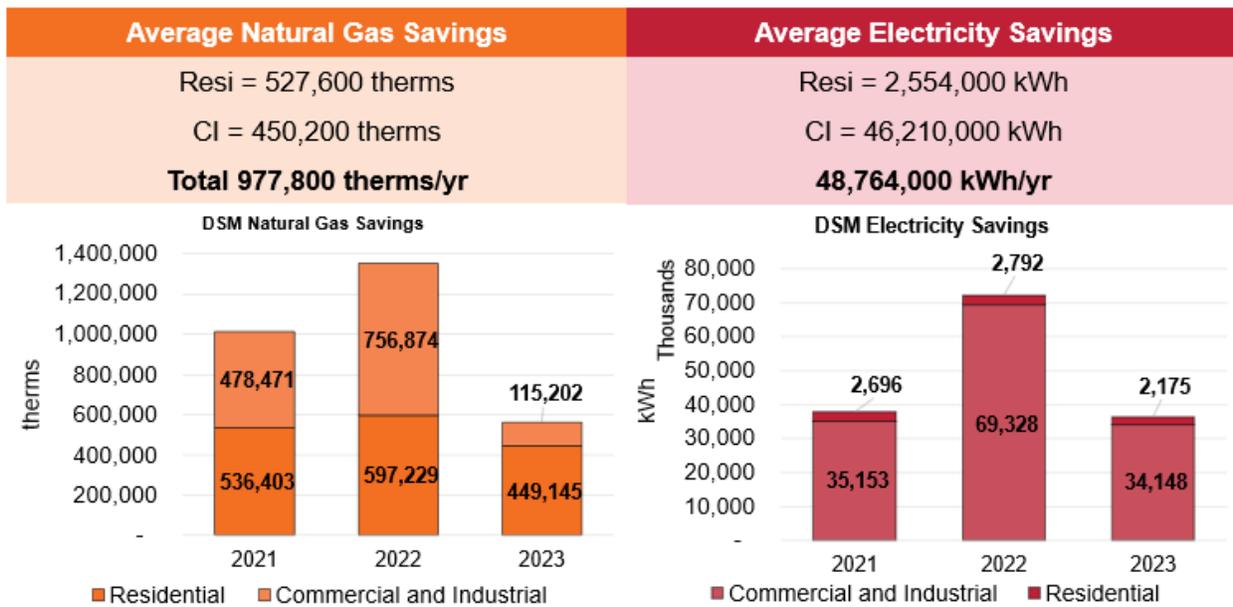


Figure 13. Average energy efficiency program savings

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## **APPENDIX E: IMPLEMENTATION TRACKING**

Download a copy of the [Adams County Regional Energy Action Plan Implementation Workbook](#).