Southern California REGIONAL ENERGY NETWORK | I·REN INLAND REGIONAL ENERGY NETWORK

Piloting Heat Pump Technology in California's Desert

The City of Blythe, a rural agency's first step into heat pump technology, made possible with zero upfront cost.



THE CITY OF Blythe CALIFORNIA FIRST SUNRISE IN CALIFORNIA

SoCalREN and I-REN work together to support a city in need.

Blythe sits in the far southeastern corner of Riverside County, along the Colorado River — hours from the resources and program attention that larger, more urban agencies often receive first. The City of Blythe initially engaged with the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) and shared that, while a prior citywide retrofit had already upgraded most of the City's equipment, they were still interested in any available incentive programs to upgrade their remaining equipment, particularly their water heaters.

The City of Blythe came to the table with a familiar set of constraints: an extremely tight budget, no funds set aside for equipment upgrades, and a facilities team that, like many in smaller and more rural agencies, was cautious about untested technology. That left the City in a bind, willing to save energy, but without a clear way to pay for it. I-REN referred the agency to SoCalREN, whose direct install program offered Blythe new, high-efficiency water heaters at no cost. I-REN provided technical and application assistance while SoCalREN coordinated the incentive reservation and contractor availability. Together, the Regional Energy Networks (RENs) tailored their services to meet the City's needs and help it save energy for years to come.

City of Blythe's Projects

At the Police Department and Community Center, aging water heaters were far overdue for replacement. SoCalREN installed **two new high-efficiency tankless gas water heaters**, one at each site, at no cost to the City.

At City Hall, the water heater also needed replacement, but the site wasn't eligible for the tankless gas replacement the City had originally planned. Rather than treating that as a dead end, SoCalREN saw an opening: **pilot a heat pump water heater at the site** instead, fully covered with SoCalREN's Public Agency Programs and cash incentives.



Heat pump water heater installed at City of Blythe's City Hall

$28,000+
Incentives secured
(100% cost coverage)

56,461
Therms
(Lifetime savings)

69.7
Cars taken off the road
Lifetime therm savings greenhouse gas equivalency

SoCalREN Public Agency Programs are administered by the County of Los Angeles and I-REN is a collaboration between the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, San Bernardino Council of Governments, and the Western Riverside Council of Governments. SoCalREN and I-REN are funded by California utility ratepayers under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.

socalren.org/casestudies

Southern California REGIONAL ENERGY NETWORK | I·REN INLAND REGIONAL ENERGY NETWORK

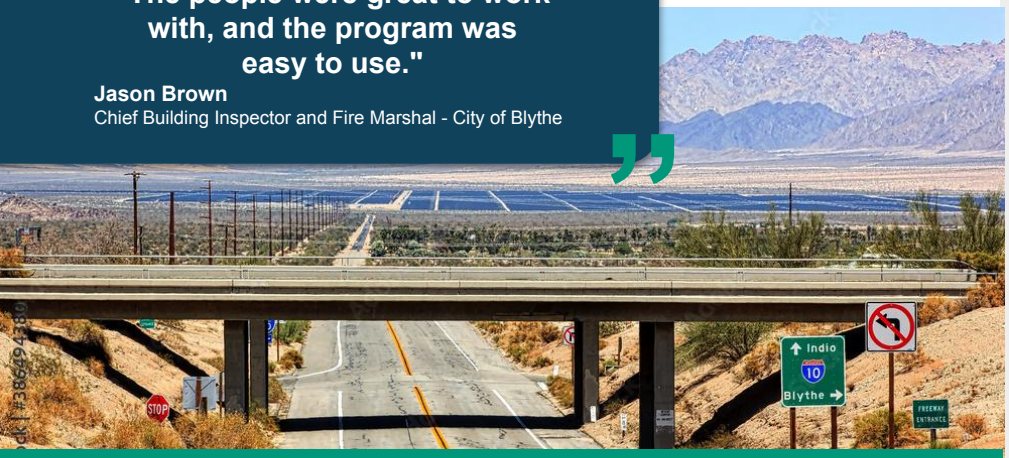
Meeting Rural Agencies Where They're At

By removing cost and risk from the equation, SoCalREN gave a rural, resource-constrained agency room to modernize its facilities and take a first step toward newer technology. It's a model SoCalREN continues to apply across its hard-to-reach and underserved agencies: meet cities where they are, and let a successful pilot build the case for what comes next.

I-REN believes in providing equitable access to energy efficiency resources, and the associated cost savings is crucial to the future of the local communities we serve.

This case serves as a prime example of the impact of Regional Energy Networks, demonstrating how RENs work collaboratively, as prioritized by the CPUC, to avoid duplicating efforts, amplify each other's programs, and ensure public agencies across California maximize their energy efficiency.

> **"The people were great to work with, and the program was easy to use."**
>
> **Jason Brown**
> Chief Building Inspector and Fire Marshal - City of Blythe



Learn more about SoCalREN's dedicated work with rural and underserved agencies, and see if your public agency qualifies for our no-cost services at **socalren.org/agencies/underserved.**

Learn more about I-REN's customized energy efficiency project support by visiting **iren.gov**

Services Provided

Below are the no-cost services SoCalREN and I-REN provided that led to the completion of a successful project!

SoCalREN

- Incentive application
- Project management
- Procurement and construction support

I-REN

- Energy usage review
- Energy audit
- Post installation support

SoCalREN Public Agency Programs are administered by the County of Los Angeles and I-REN is a collaboration between the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, San Bernardino Council of Governments, and the Western Riverside Council of Governments. SoCalREN and I-REN are funded by California utility ratepayers under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.