



CHELSEA GROUP LIMITED

Chelsea Group is creating conversations about the struggle each building operator, engineer, or manager faces.

Andy Beth Miller

Honolulu, HI On March 30, 2017, Chelsea Group hosted its fifth quarterly CPeO (central plant energy efficiency) Users Group event. The group, which is open to all who desire to learn, was developed in 2016 by the local building science firm helmed by CEO George Benda to aid those properties (16 in total) which received incentives for installing additional controls and monitoring systems to their central plants via Hawaii Energy's rebate program—the goal being to benchmark, improve, and optimize all plant operations based on data that has been collected by Chelsea Group throughout the past years.

Guests included representatives from six of the buildings within the rebate program, as well as a head engineer of Hawaii Energy, approximately ten client guests, and a handful of Chelsea Group engineers and building scientists. As attendees enjoyed delicious fare from a local deli, Chelsea Group led a stimulating open forum discussion. After an introduction from Benda, Chelsea Group senior building scientist Wyeth Crawford took to the stage with his presentation, "Understanding and Improving Your Central Plant."

According to Chelsea Group building scientist Dricka Thobois, the presentation, as well as the event in totality, was a great success. "It was really exciting. This was one of the best and most interactive we've had so far," she says. Thobois continued to explain in simplified terms what clients and attendees could take away from the facts presented by Crawford, saying that, "Basically, [Crawford] was helping attendees see just how much information and data these installed systems in their buildings have been collecting, also explaining how useful that information is in helping them improve upon present operations, as well as offering advice on how to better plan for future projects."

In fact, everyone was getting so deeply involved in the conversation, that it made the meeting go a bit over its scheduled time, according to Thobois. And as for the gathering's diversity, Thobois shares that "We had two general managers represented, as well as several engineers, and getting their feedback on what they would need [regarding data and the information we could provide for them] to actually get ownership onboard with needed implementations and future projects, proved very enlightening and valuable."



Chelsea Group Building Scientist Wyeth Crawford presents to CPeO members

Chelsea Group building scientist Lisa Reddinger also sees the tremendous value of the collective gathering. "I believe the peer group is very essential to sharing best practices and learning from

industry veterans," she says. "The discussion created conversations about the struggle each building operator, engineer, or manager faces on a daily basis, and I saw each of them walk away with at least one new thought for using data and working toward efficiency."

Benda further reiterates the enrichment offered among the group, stating that, "Two minds are always better than one when it comes to problem solving. The complex mechanical systems of these large buildings benefit from more than a dozen minds coming together at our CPeO Users Group meetings, so that together, we can find a better way forward. I'm proud to be part of it."

So how, specifically, did the event aid this collective in moving forward toward optimization? Utilizing sample data procured from a past Chelsea Group project—a summary report from First Hawaiian Center—Crawford's presentation, combined with the open forum discussion among attendees, could shed light on how to not only understand, but how to best utilize collected data.

"Large buildings with huge central air conditioning systems have many challenges in common," explains Benda. "Learning to spot opportunities in tens of thousands of data points can help meet those challenges. That's what our work in the CPeO users group is all about."

Benda also expresses his pleasure at the positive outcomes already being seen via this initiative: "We've already documented that the projects that have resulted directly and indirectly from this program are reducing electrical usage by millions of kilowatt hours each year. It is a success that Chelsea Group and our partner, Hawaii Energy, are proud to share."

The positive feedback keeps flowing from fellow attendee and First Hawaiian Center VP of Facilities Engineer, Peter J. Hayase. "The Chelsea Group sponsored quarterly CPeO events have been a terrific forum for meeting our downtown facility counterparts, learning of their CPeO initiatives, and for sharing common central plant challenges and ideas," he shares. "Specifically, the Chelsea Group member building case studies were very useful in showing how energy trends and deficiencies could be captured from our mountains of central plant data."

These "mountains of data" Hayase describes are just some of the assets that Chelsea Group and these events are empowering attendees to utilize in building a brighter future, focusing forward. "We encourage our clients to look twenty years forward, not twenty years back," Benda says of his firm. "The CPeO effort lets them see into that future with greater clarity, by giving clear data and analysis in the present moment."

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ABOUT Chelsea Group

Chelsea Group is a Hawaii-based building science consulting firm specializing in preserving and enhancing the mechanical infrastructure in existing commercial office, institutional, retail, and industrial facilities. For more than 25 years, Chelsea's building scientists and engineers have

solved problems and found opportunities that add asset value to these properties. The Chelsea team is widely recognized for its thought leadership in sustainable, high performance buildings.