



WELCOME TO THE JANUARY 2008 ISSUE OF OUR MONTHLY UPDATE!

LISSA, JOEL, NETTY, CARL & DIANA

Regional Highlights/Activities

CENTRAL REGION

■ **Back to the Basics:** On January 12th nearly 80 people attended the Back to Basics program hosted by Happy Dancing Turtle. With the theme of living sustainably. There were sessions focusing on recycling, trash to treasure (art project), benefits and income of owning small wind turbines, an introduction to solar for your home and business, and eating locally. Happy Dancing Turtle will also host the EcoSquared Energy fair in late July. For more information, contact Barb Hines at 218.587.2303 or barbhines@happydancingturtle.org

NORTHEAST REGION

■ **Duluth Wind Turbine make News:** Business North, a news source for Northeastern Minnesota and Northwestern Wisconsin has a story on roof top wind turbines being constructed at the St. Louis County Government Services Center in Duluth. The article also hits on recent state energy legislation. [Read article here.](#)

■ **GSHP Discussions in NE:** A few folks in the Northeast region have been having some lively discussions about ground source heat pump (GSHP) technology and whether or not the technology actually lowers greenhouse gas emissions. In light of this discussion, Mike LeBeau sent this link to an Energy Center of Wisconsin publication entitled, "[Emissions and Economic Analysis of Ground Source Heat Pumps in Wisconsin](#)" and summarized it as follows: "The attached study gives much needed depth to any analysis of GSHP performance in our climate. In climates with little or no cooling loads and/or higher reliance on coal for generation the emission increases will be larger and the payback longer." Mike also reports that the Minnesota

Department of Commerce has commissioned a similar study to be done using Minnesota climates and details. Thanks for the update, Mike!

NORTHWEST REGION

■ **Northland Looks to Wind Power:** The East Grand Forks Campus of the Northland Community and Technical College is committed to implementing appropriate renewable energy technologies, and is looking into the feasibility of installing wind power. The College recently received a \$5,000 grant from CERTs to determine if there is enough wind capacity to place the turbine on campus. If there is enough wind capacity the school will research funding resources to put up a turbine.

SOUTHEAST REGION

■ **Renewables at MSU:** According to the Minnesota State University Mankato website, MSU and Minnesota West will be sharing a \$500,000 grant that will help both schools continue to develop programs focusing on renewable energy. [Find the article here.](#)

SOUTHWEST REGION

■ **New Community Wind Handbook:** Annette Bair, the Southwest CERT Coordinator, along with the Southwest Regional Development Commission and the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute have helped fund and create a Community Wind Handbook. This is a great resource for communities in Minnesota that are looking to start a wind project in their area. The handbook explains the benefits of community owned energy, addresses many common concerns, and helps steer parties into action. The Community Wind Handbook has recently been updated. [Click here to view the Handbook.](#)

WEST CENTRAL REGION

■ **YES! Update:** Over 80 people attended the Youth Energy Summit ([Web](#)) winter workshop at the Minnesota West Community & Technical College ([Web](#)) in Granite Falls. Of the nine active teams, seven were able to attend and hear about the variety of careers available in renewable energy as well as learn from experts in the field. CERTs staff was able to present along with the Center for Energy & the Environment on how to reduce your carbon footprint, and later presented energy posters and announced that \$6,000 was available from WC CERT to support student energy projects. YES projects vary from wind, solar, a campus green house and energy efficiency upgrades on a local theatre. "It is always exciting to hear what the students are doing in their communities," said Anne Dybsetter, Prairie Woods Education Coordinator and MC of the event. "Teams learned about the wide array of opportunities within the renewable energy field and then get to stand up and share what they are doing with their peers."

■ **Morris Completes Feedstock Contracting:** The University of Minnesota Morris has completed its biomass contracting process for the feedstocks it will use during its first season of operation. The 1,700 tons of Minnesota grown corn stover and wood chips will be used in a first of its kind biomass gasification facility to replace over \$150,000 worth of natural gas brought in from other areas of the country and Canada. The Morris based West Central Research and Outreach Center in partnership with the Minnesota DNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, organized collection of an additional 300 tons of native grass for a study on the harvesting and gasification potential of native grasses from conservation lands.

METRO REGION

■ **Metro CERT Update:** The Metro CERT team now has a monthly update! Follow the link to read about cool clean energy projects like the Southeast Como Neighborhood Solar Pilot Project, plus resource and calendar links, and highlights from the Green Institute's local government survey.

[Click here to view the January update.](#)

Statewide Activities/Highlights

■ **Pawlenty Energy Initiatives:** On February 17, 2008, Governor Pawlenty announced several energy initiatives for the state to encourage local and renewable energy projects.

[Official press release](#) | [MPR story](#) | [Star Tribunes story](#)

■ **Free Climate and Energy Assistance for Minnesota Communities** ([Web link](#)): Minnesota communities are faced with significant issues related to climate change and energy. The Minnesota Climate Change Corps (CCC) is a new program, started in November 2007, comprising skilled, retired professionals who work on either long or short-term assignments to help reduce a community's carbon footprint (the amount of carbon dioxide released into the environment).

The CCC, an initiative of the Minnesota Retired Engineers Technical Assistance Program (RETAP), is funded by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. City and county governments are the Corps' priorities for assistance. Examples of assistance are:

- Identifying opportunities for carbon reductions
- Recommending cost-saving measures and projects with high returns on investment
- Assessing energy conservation options
- Developing community outreach strategies
- Energy audits

- Starting and strengthening a climate change action plan
- Reducing use of and reliance on fossil fuels
- Advising on energy-saving technologies and practices

The CCC will customize its assistance to meet your needs, and coordinates closely with RETAP's technical specialists. For more information contact Jim Jacques, Corps Coordinator, at jimjacques@comcast.net or 612/747-6023. For more information on RETAP contact RETAP Coordinator Mike Vennewitz at retap2002@yahoo.com.

■ **Focus The Nation** is going crazy with events and tools to help fight global warming ([Web link](#)). Their Focus News includes:

- HS Teachers—need lesson plans on global warming? Check out the resources from Earth Day Network and ClimateChangeEducation.org.
- Forty Percent of Car Trips are within two miles of your home: Take Clif Bar's Two-Mile Challenge and ride or walk instead! Check it out.
- Stop Your Junk Mail! Sign up with 41 Pounds, and a portion of the income is donated directly to FTN.
- The President's Climate Commitment: Has your University or College President signed on?
- Take PennState's survey on climate change values.

Link of the Month: A Toolkit for Local Government

Produced in 2007 by the Extension Service at the University of Wisconsin, *Toward a Sustainable Community: A Toolkit for Local Government* is a 48-page online publication that focuses on guidance for making internal local government functions more sustainable in the areas of: Energy, buildings, transportation/mobility, procurement, investments and human resources. Under each area actions, strategies, case studies, resources and purpose are covered.

This guide stresses the benefits of and reasons for using the science-based Natural Step sustainability framework developed in Sweden to guide implementation of sustainable city goals. Resolutions for becoming an eco-municipality and using the Natural Step are included from seven Wisconsin communities.

<http://www4.uwm.edu/shwec>

*To see Upcoming Events visit
www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/events.html*

FOR MORE INFO ABOUT CERTS, CONTACT

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