



helping Minnesota communities determine their energy future

CERTs PARTNERS

*University of Minnesota
Regional Sustainable*

*Development
Partnerships*

The Minnesota Project

*Southwest Regional
Development
Commission*

Green Institute

*Minnesota Department
of Commerce*

CERTs FUNDERS

*Minnesota Department
of Commerce*

Blandin Foundation

*Minnesota Pollution
Control Agency*

*University of Minnesota
Institute for Renewable
Energy and the
Environment*

*University of Minnesota
Regional Sustainable
Development
Partnerships*

*U.S. Department of
Energy*



Clean Energy Resource Teams Milestones

The following outlines major CERT milestones. While significant, these milestones are unable to convey the major impact CERT members have had on the program. Since its official launch in 2003, CERT members from across the state have made tremendous on-going contributions to CERTs via participation in regional CERT Steering Committees (4-6 meetings/year/region), at quarterly team meetings, workshops and tours (3-4 meetings/year/region), and at local (mini) CERT meetings and events. Indeed, these community volunteers have contributed over 10,000 hours to CERTs in the past five years. Without the dedication of these community members the milestones listed below would not have been possible.

2001 University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships (Regional Partnerships) host "Sharing the Load: Local Electric Energy Generation and Distribution" (this event demonstrates the broad interest in community energy and catalyzes further community energy discussions).

2002 Janet Streff of the Minnesota Department of Commerce State Energy Office and Diane Jensen, then of the Minnesota Project, conceive of the original idea for the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) – modeling it after local soil and water planning boards – coin the CERT name, and submit a proposal for CERT funding to the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR).

The Minnesota Project, in collaboration with the Regional Partnerships and Minnesota Department of Commerce, begins to develop the CERT Manual entitled, "Designing a Clean Energy Future: A Resource Manual".

2003 CERTs is awarded Phase I funding by the LCMR. This funding, along with funding from the Minnesota Department of Commerce, formally launches the CERT program and brings on the original CERT partners: Minnesota Project, University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, Southwest Regional Development Commission (at that point staffing the Rural Minnesota Energy Task Force) and Hennepin County (at that point staffing the Metro County Energy Task Force). The Phase I Work Plan stipulates that each CERT will convene interested stakeholders from their communities and develop a common level of technical understanding, perform a conservation and renewable energy resource inventory relevant to the resource availability and the community needs, develop an energy action plan that prioritizes cost- and community-effective energy projects, and work to implement projects to the extent possible in each region.

CERT Manual is published in July 2003.

During fall 2003 the Regional Partnerships hire Lissa Pawlisch as their CERTs Coordinator and hosts the first CERT meetings in the Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and West Central Regions.

2004 Teams hold quarterly meetings, workshops and tours. Teams gather regional energy usage, efficiency and renewable energy data, establish organizational missions and begin drafting their Regional Strategic Energy Plans. Teams also hire students from University of Minnesota Duluth, University of Minnesota Morris, University of Minnesota Twin Cities and Bemidji State University to help assist in with the research needed for the Strategic Energy Plans.

Regional Partnerships hire Joel Haskard as the Assistant CERT Coordinator with funding from the Minnesota Department of Commerce.

2004 CERTs receive funding from the Blandin Foundation.

In January 2004, Southwest Regional Development Commission staff, Annette Bair hosted the first CERT meeting in Southwest Minnesota. Professors Steve Hoffman and Angela High-Pippert of the University of St. Thomas begin their CERT evaluation work with site visits and a written survey distributed to regional meeting participants.

2005 CERT Partners host their first statewide conference, “Tomorrow’s Energy in Communities Today”.

January 1, 2005 the Rural Minnesota Energy Board, a joint powers board is formed (formally the Rural Minnesota Energy Task Force). Teams release their Regional Strategic Energy Plans in June 2005. The Plans catalogue regional energy usage and energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities. Each Team’s Plan also sets forth its regional energy priorities based on the region’s best bet energy options. Drs. Steve Hoffman and Angela High-Pippert issue their first CERT Evaluation Report in May 2005. CERTs receive a second round of funding from LCMR to implement Phase II. This phase is to focus on building local capacity to sustain the CERTs framework within each region, to overcome challenges to project implementation, use the resource inventories, implement the plans, and put finished projects on the ground.

2006 CERT Program is awarded the Minnesota Environmental Initiative’s Partnership of the Year Award.

Teams release their first Request for Proposals for technical assistance and fund a total of 15 projects. In fall of 2006 and spring of 2007 CERTs co-hosts Energy Efficiency Workshops for school and local government building operators in each of the six Greater Minnesota CERT regions that attract 275 attendees.

2007 CERT Partners host their second statewide conference “Local Energy/Local Opportunities.” The event is a huge success and attracts over 400 attendees.

In January 2007 CERT evaluators, Drs. Steve Hoffman and Angela High-Pippert, issue their second CERT evaluation survey, this time utilizing an online format. According to this 2007 survey, 95 percent of active CERT members believe that the program has been a success in the state of Minnesota. In addition to the online survey, Drs. Hoffman and High-Pippert conduct focus groups in each region with Steering Committee members and very active CERT participants. Results from these focus groups are released in a 2008 Evaluation Report.

CERT Program is written into Minnesota State Statute.

Governor Tim Pawlenty signs SF 2096—the Omnibus Energy and Natural Resources finance bill which contains provisions to continue funding CERTs with \$625,000 each year in fiscal years 2008 and 2009. This funding includes substantial support for implementing community-scale clean energy projects in existing CERT regions across the state, and additional funding to foster creation of Metro CERTs.

The Green Institute is selected to coordinate the Twin Cities Metro CERTs Network.

CERTs receive funding from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to catalyze local clean energy projects.

Greater Minnesota teams release their second Request for Proposals for technical assistance and fund a total of 32 projects.

2008 CERTs staff work through a complete website redesign, with a new site to be launched at the end of April.

Host Metro CERTs Network kick-off event.

Greater Minnesota teams release their third Request for Proposals for technical assistance.

2009 CERTs will host its third statewide conference in St. Cloud on February 10th and 11th, 2009, and expect to attract more than 500 attendees