



Press Release

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Meeting the Demand for Solar Heating & Green Jobs in Minnesota with Hot Rebates

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wednesday, September 8, 2010, Saint Paul, MN – The Clean Energy Resource Teams are launching *Hot Rebates for Solar Thermal*, a campaign connecting businesses and residents to Minnesota-made solar thermal systems, local certified installers, and limited-time rebates.

With rising fuel costs, solar thermal has a growing popularity here in Minnesota. The Clean Energy Resource Teams are currently funding twelve innovative solar thermal projects across the state through its seed grant program—seven more than were funded in 2008. “There’s an obvious increase in interest for solar thermal projects across Minnesota,” says Michelle Vigen, who coordinates CERTs’ seed grant program. “Residents and businesses alike are looking to solar thermal as a way to meet their energy needs and mitigate the effects of rising fuel prices.”



Installing a solar air heating system in northern MN

While “solar energy” is often thought of as generating electricity, solar thermal systems offer a more efficient use of solar power, using the sun’s energy to heat our water and warm our spaces. Solar thermal systems can significantly cut heating bills. This is especially true in Minnesota, where homes and businesses rely heavily on furnaces and hot water systems in the winter months.

The Minnesota Office of Energy Security hopes that Minnesotans will take advantage of this technology, and is offering up to \$500,000 in solar thermal rebates for business and residents for a limited time. While rebate amounts will vary by system size, businesses and multi-family units can apply for rebates of up to \$25,000 for a solar thermal system, and homeowners can receive a rebate to cover up to 25% of their system costs. “This is an amazing opportunity for people to get great deals on a solar thermal system and support green manufacturing jobs right here in Minnesota,” says Joel Haskard, co-coordinator of CERTs.

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Minnesotans can also consider solar thermal installations an investment in their local economies. Minnesota is home to two companies that manufacture Solar Rating and Certification Corporation-Certified solar air heating systems, the Rural Renewable Energy Alliance in Pine River and Energy Conservation Products and Services based in Carlton. And SolarSkies, based in Alexandria, is Minnesota's sole manufacturer of solar water heating systems.



Minnesota-made solar thermal hot water panels

"This is an exciting time for renewable energy, specifically solar thermal," says Randy Hagen of SolarSkies. "We have been waiting for an opportunity like this to arise when there is both a Federal incentive and a State incentive available for purchasers of solar thermal systems, and that time is now. We are happy to see the growing interest in solar thermal and in our Minnesota-manufactured solar thermal products."

Time is running out for those interested in the rebates, but there could not be a more perfect time to act. For those in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, the incentives are even greater. The Minnesota Renewable Energy Society is organizing a solar thermal water heating bulk-buy program called "Make Mine Solar H2O." Their early participants will be able to take advantage of both the bulk-buy rate and the state rebate.

"For people interested in supporting Minnesota clean energy jobs and saving money on a solar thermal system, this summer is the time to act—before the incentives are gone and the air starts getting cooler," says Haskard. "People can save money on their space heating costs, increase their home's value, and support Minnesota renewable energy businesses at the same time."

Minnesotans who are interested in learning more about installing a solar thermal system on their home or business should visit <http://solarthermal.mncerts.org> to answer a few simple questions, and the manufacturers will respond to them directly to get them on their way to heating with the power of the sun!

High-resolution graphics and more quotations from Minnesota residents, businesses, manufacturers, and installers available upon request.

Hot Rebates for Solar Thermal is the third in a series of "CERTified Campaigns" from the Clean Energy Resource Teams to provide Minnesotans with clear and actionable ways to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in their community. To learn about other campaigns, visit <http://act.mncerts.org>.

The Clean Energy Resource Teams connect Minnesotans with resources to identify and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. CERTs is made up of community members across Minnesota who share a bold vision for Minnesota's energy future: to foster strong communities, to create local jobs, and to develop clean and reliable energy from clean sources. CERTs is a partnership of the University of Minnesota's Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, the Green Institute, Southwest Regional Development Commission, The Minnesota Project, and the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Office of Energy Security.

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