

Summary Central Region CERTs Meeting

Central Lakes Agricultural Center, Staples, MN

February 23, 2006, 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Meeting attendees included Erika Johnson, Norm Krause, Ryan and Paul Hunt, Jay and Jody Idzorek, Lissa Pawlisch, Joel Haskard, Linda Ulland, and Shaun Anderson. Several folks sent their regrets – Jason was installing a solar system, David was at a conference talking about small wind systems in Winona until 11 pm the night before – great work! ☺

CERTs Energy Film

We started out watching the CERT Energy DVD put together by Erika Johnson with Natural Innovations and several students from Moorhead State. It's a great piece of work and captures some truly wonderful projects from the region. The Central CERT film will be shown on Lakeland Public Television out of Bemidji April 4th at 9:00 pm and April 11th at 9:30 pm. Please visit the following link as the airing date comes closer: <http://www.lakelandptv.org/>.

Erika hopes to use this as a launching point for a broader “Minnesota Projects from Minnesota People” endeavor that will highlight energy project from around the whole state.

After the DVD we discussed a bit about what could make it better next time. Erika felt like the editing could have been a bit better with more time looks at the “technologies” and less time filming people talking, but it was a great start. The only other comment was that perhaps the segments were a bit too long. Maybe 5-6 minutes would work better for some segments than 7 minutes. Overall, everyone felt very enthusiastic about the piece and the tremendous effort that Erika and the students put into it. Hurrah!

Staples Biomass/Corn Burner

Norm Krause gave a quick update on the corn burner project. The HeatMor unit for the Central Lakes Agricultural Center was slated to arrive in Staples on February 24th. Norm expects it to be up and running within a few weeks of delivery. They went with HeatMor (<http://www.heatmor.com/products.htm>) because they had a decent sized commercial pellet stove that should produce 200,000 BTUs. Central Lakes Ag Center is planning to do an ash analysis and economic analysis of the project, both of which should provide more detailed information to inform the purchasing decisions for the Staples High School and Central Lakes Ag College.

Central Lakes College is also now talking to Hagen Engineering about providing training programs for ethanol plant employees. Hagen has 70 new plant construction projects lined up for the next 4 years – with that kind of booming business there are sure to be more skilled jobs available.

Lastly, Norm mentioned the website www.pelletheat.org and its Cost Comparison calculator. Check it out at: <http://www.pelletheat.org/3/residential/compareFuel.cfm>.

Other News

Jay and Jody Idzorek and Ryan Hunt gave a brief update about Green Range Biodiesel. Things continue to push forward, and they continue to build their local client base.

This July the Cass County Fair at Pine River will include Eco2. It will be a one day event highlighting renewable energy, sustainable food and farming, and sustainable living. Lynn and Copper Harding are coordinating presenters and booths.

The last item we discussed was the payback time for public buildings. Public buildings generally have a 5 year payback requirement. This often discourages the use of energy efficiency and renewable energy applications which may have higher upfront costs (longer payback) but benefit a structure over its entire life. Many suggested that this payback requirement would need to be adjusted, to span a buildings entire anticipated lifespan, if we are to ensure greater implementation of sustainable building practices.

We adjourned @ 7:30.