

**Meeting Summary: White Earth Land Recovery Project (WELRP)
& Central Region Clean Energy Resource Team (CERT) present:
“Anishinaabe-Led Clean Energy Projects”
Monday, May 18th, 11:30am to 1:30pm
607 Main Avenue
Callaway, Minnesota 56521**

25 people attended this event

Agenda

11:30am – Introductions

11:45am – Founding Director Winona LaDuke gave some background information on the White Earth Land Recovery Project <http://nativeharvest.com/node/1> and some of the projects that CERTs has partially funded these last few years, including an energy efficiency campaign installing CFLs in the homes of elderly residents as well as solar thermal hot air installation and training with WELRP. She and Tony Tibbetts also showed the tour the site where the refurbished 75 kw Lolland turbine will be installed; WELRP is working with XH Industries in California <http://usedrebuiltwindturbines.com/home>.

During the tour, people talked about the energy assistance programs and weatherization programs offered for low-income individuals <http://www.state.mn.us/portal/mn/jsp/content.do?id=-536893810&agency=Energy>

The tour was also interested in the residential energy audit trainings available from Dunwoody Technical College In Minneapolis. To learn about available dates in Minneapolis and sites across the state, please visit <http://www.dunwoody.edu/custom/energyaudit.html>

12:30pm – Lunch – During lunch people traded resources and project ideas. Funding is always an issue, and the USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP):

*USDA issued a Notice of Solicitation for Applications (NOSA) for Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grants, loan guarantees and feasibility study funding. **Applications are due on July 31.***

The full Federal Register notice can be found [here](#).

This year’s program highlights, including changes made in the 2008 Farm Bill, include:

Types of Funding Assistance** REAP provides loan guarantees and grants or combinations of the two. Grants for **feasibility studies** are a new feature this year, with application instructions and ranking criteria explained in the NOSA. **NOTE: USDA is currently requesting comments on its feasibility study guidelines.

Maximum awards are as follows:

- *Renewable energy system grants - \$500,000 or 25% of eligible project costs, whichever is less.*
- *Energy efficiency grants - \$250,000 or 25% of eligible project costs, whichever is less.*
- *Loan guarantees - \$25 million or 75% of eligible project costs, whichever is less.*
- *Feasibility studies - \$50,000 or 25% of eligible study costs, whichever is less.*

Small Grants, Feasibility Studies, Ocean/Hydropower

- 20% of REAP funding is set aside for grants of \$20,000 or less (assuming it is used); USDA will add 10 points to the application score for these projects.
- 10% of REAP funding is set aside for feasibility study grants.
- Ocean and small hydropower projects (30 MW or less) are now eligible for REAP funding.

Applications and Scoring

The NOSA provides for four types of applications: loan guarantee only, grant only, loan guarantee plus grant (combo) and feasibility study only. The official combo and feasibility study application options are new.

Although most applications can be submitted electronically through the Grants.gov website, applications for loan guarantees and combos must be submitted in hard copy form.

USDA has made a few changes to the scoring criteria, in part to reflect changes in the 2008 Farm Bill:

- Project “replicability” is removed as a scoring criterion.
- The expected energy efficiency of a renewable energy system is added as a criterion.
- For a combo application, the grant portion must score at least 20 points out of 35 for technical merit in order for the project to be considered eligible.

USDA also has added new application requirements:

- Only one type of application can be submitted for any one project -a feasibility study only, loan guarantee only, grant only or combo application.
- Projects can use either pre-commercial or commercial technologies, including foreign technologies, as long as an applicant can provide proof that the technology works and there are people available who can adequately install and service the project.
- All applicants must obtain review of their applications by State and local governments to ensure compliance with local regulations.

Loan Guarantee Changes

The maximum loan guarantee has increased from \$10 million to \$25 million. USDA will guarantee:

- 85% of a loan up to \$600,000.
- 80% of a loan greater than \$600,000 and up to and including \$5 million.
- 70% of a loan greater than \$5 million up to and including \$10 million.
- 60% of a loan guarantee over \$10 million.

Loan guarantees and combos cannot exceed 75% of project costs - this is an increase from 50% of project costs in previous years.

The annual fee for loan guarantees for 2009 is a 1% origination fee with annual renewal fee of 0.25% of the loan amount

CERTs blogged about REAP and interviewed a leading grant writer in Minnesota back in March <http://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/get-answers/24/03/2009/tapping-usda-rural-energy-america-program>.

We also talked a lot about how do smaller communities get ready for the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grants?

The first stop should be the Department of Commerce-Office of Energy Security website:

<http://www.state.mn.us/portal/mn/jsp/content.do?subchannel=-536895393&id=-536893811&agency=Energy>

Here is the blog we keep on the CERTs site trying to assist folks with the federal stimulus.

<http://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/get-answers/recovery>

As you can see, we have that **Rapid Deployment Energy Efficiency Toolkit** as a useful first step for folks.

Here is the link:

http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-resources/ee_toolkit.html

For people looking to see the allocation of dollars for larger cities/counties in Minnesota that will deal directly with the Department Of Energy, they can find that information here...

<http://www.eecbg.energy.gov/grantalloc.html>

These larger cities and counties will need to be signed up via grants.gov or fed.connect by June 25th. I called this number below to confirm that the smaller towns/counties do not have to sign up, they will deal directly with Minnesota Department Of Commerce-Office of Energy Security.

If you have questions regarding the EECBG program, please contact the EERE Information Center via toll-free phone at 1-877-EERE-INFO (1-877-337-3463)

These two sites are good for those larger cities/counties

<http://www.eecbg.energy.gov/>

http://www.eecbg.energy.gov/Downloads/EECBG_FOA_Instruction_For_Downloading.pdf

Everyone else will be going for the "competitive grants" that will be administered by Minnesota's DOC-OES as mentioned on their site

<http://www.state.mn.us/portal/mn/jsp/content.do?id=-536893811&subchannel=-536895393&sc2=null&sc3=null&contentid=536917819&contenttype=EDITORIAL&programid=536917843&agency=Energy>

In conclusion, if people started digging into the RDEET information now and identifying some decent projects using those guidelines, that may be the best way to get ready for those competitive grants coming soon.

1:30pm Adjourn