



What Is Metro CERTs?

Welcome to Metro CERTs! You are receiving this email because you indicated interest on our website or at a meeting, or you are someone who we thought would be interested in our efforts.

The goal of the new Metro CERTs network is to increase the effectiveness of local efforts in conducting community energy planning and implementing **community-based** energy efficiency and clean energy projects. The role of CERTs is as a center of information; a **network of connection** between groups, local governments, and funding sources; and a general source of support. CERTs is here as a resource to help **you** make energy changes happen in **your community**.

Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) were first started in 2003 in greater Minnesota by a partnership of the state, non profits, and the University of Minnesota. This year, the Minnesota legislature adopted CERTs in the Statutes and called for the creation of a Twin Cities Metro CERTs Network.

The Metro CERTs coordinating team is currently working on forming a plan and structure for the network. You can join this conversation and let us know what you would like from CERTs by taking our brief survey.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=rSIIfmqjLIYIOAfu5bqjRA_3d_3d

Want To Get Involved?

Intrigued? Good! Here's what to do now:

- Talk to your friends, neighbors, co-workers, congregation members, and everyone else about Metro CERTs. Have them sign up on our website to join the Team, and start talking about what projects you might want to do.
- Take the MN Energy Challenge (make sure you join the Metro CERTs Team!), to take the first steps in implementing energy conservation in your home.



Already have a project? Have an idea in mind with your neighbors to reduce your energy, but not sure how to do it? Please feel free to contact us with any

stage of a project, and we will do our best to connect you with the resources you need to make it happen. If you have done a great project that you want people to know about, or feel that you may be a good resource for others trying to get things started, let us know that too!

Who Are We?

Metro CERTs is being coordinated out of the Green Institute. Your coordinators are:



Diana McKeown is the Metro CERTs coordinator with The Green Institute. Diana worked with Clean Water Action Alliance of Minnesota for over fourteen years where she gained experience with media work, grassroots organizing, campaign planning, lobbying, and fundraising. Diana has experience building strategic campaigns and coalitions. Additionally, Diana was trained in early 2007 as a climate messenger by Al Gore to present a version of his slide show from “An Inconvenient

Truth”. You can contact her at dmckeown@greeninstitute.org

Carl Nelson is the Associate Director of Programs at The Green Institute. Before coming to The Green Institute, he was a co-coordinator for a statewide renewable energy coalition. He has extensive experience in feasibility and development of wind, solar, biomass and energy efficiency including working on wind projects near where he grew up in west-central Minnesota. Contact him at cnelson@greeninstitute.org



Louise Sharrow is the community energy intern at The Green Institute. A junior at Macalester College, she is majoring in Environmental Studies. Other campaigns she is involved in include the National Campus Energy Challenge, a nation-wide energy saving competition to occur in February 2008. Contact her at esharrow@macalester.edu

What's Happening in the Twin Cities?

The Twin Cities Metro area is full of energy! Clean, community-based energy, that is. People at all levels are working toward creating a more energy-efficient, environmentally friendly metro region, and more is happening than you might think. It is a great time for Metro CERTs to be getting started, providing a way to connect these various projects with each other and with new efforts to add even more value and support.

Let's start with the City of Minneapolis. The city has outfitted a number of its municipal buildings with solar panels in the past few years. Fire Station No. 6, the Royalston Maintenance Facility, and the Currie Equipment Facility all now sport solar panels which provide from 2.6 to 5 kW of electricity on each building. The buildings also take advantage of natural daylight and energy efficient lighting to minimize their electricity use. Part of the funding for these projects came from EPA and State of Minnesota grants.

The City itself can also be a source of funding, through the Climate Change Innovation Funds and Climate Change Micro-Grants. The King Field neighborhood is one of the 20 neighborhoods that received a micro-grant this year. Their Green Committee used the grant to purchase hand-held energy calculators which can be lent out to community members who will monitor and report the electricity use of 10 appliances. Sara Linnes-Robinson from the Kingfield Neighborhood Association emphasized that having people sign a "Pledge to Unplug" and also report their findings back created a "connection back to the community", creating a group of people who care about these issues and can work together.

Municipalities are certainly not the only groups with the power to implement energy projects. Congregations, especially through the organization Congregations Caring for Creation(C3), have taken it upon themselves to make



changes in their energy use. The Basilica of St Mary's is in the process of a plan to become carbon-neutral. They are approaching this from two directions: First, they are attempting to reduce the actual footprint of the Basilica through more efficient use of materials and conservation. They are also appealing to their parishioners to do their part. The Basilica looked at its carbon numbers from last year, and hopes to be able

to offset that much by having 1,000 families sign on to the MN Energy Challenge and make changes in their households. (This would be the largest congregation group, beating St Joan of Arc which is currently holding the lead at 420 members). Janice Anderson at the Basilica said that they are trying to "get as many people involved as possible", so that these changes would become a part of everyone's lives.

Community and neighborhood groups are also a great place to look for project models. In the Southeast Como Neighborhood, a Solar Pilot Project is an exciting example of community coming together to make change happen.

The Southeast Como Improvement Association (SECIA) worked with a local installer to put 17 solar hot water systems in homes, businesses, and apartments in the area. This pilot project has uncovered some obstacles that others can be aware of, and revealed the benefits of working together. (For more information on this project, read the case study http://renewableenergy.greeninstitute.org/images/solar%20pioneers_solar%20Thermal%20REport_Green%20Institute_Dec.2007.pdf)

The Mahtomedi public school district is doing their part through their participation in the Schools for Energy Efficiency (SEE) program. The efforts of students, staff, faculty, and administrators led to an Energy Star Leader Award for improving their efficiency rating by 10 points district wide. In addition, they have saved over \$247,000 in energy costs over the last three years. Much of these savings come from working with students and staff to change behaviors and raise awareness about where energy is wasted in the building and how and why to eliminate that waste.

These are but a small sample of all the projects going on. Others include: small business solar installations such as those at Izzy's ice cream store, Old Man River Bakery, Wedge Co-Op, Upper Midwest Gourmet, and others; the wind turbine at the Apple Valley School for Environmental Studies; biodiesel fuel fleet in Brooklyn Park; the green Hope Community Wellstone Building; the Linden Hills Power and Light anaerobic digester; and a variety of others.

For Sources and More Information, see:

<http://www.ips-solar.com/PGSJofA.html>

<http://www.stjoan.com/dirfr.htm>

<http://www.mnenergychallenge.org/>

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/solar.asp>

<http://secomo.org/drupal/index.php?q=solar-page>

<http://www.mnrenewables.org/>

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/index.asp>

<http://www.seeprograms.com/>

http://four.mary.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=60&Itemid=75

Local Government Survey Highlights

In the summer of 2007, The Green Institute conducted a survey of local government in the Metro area to identify the interests of local governments in taking action towards energy sustainability, as well as to identify current actions they are taking. Some highlights of the survey include, the majority surveyed rank energy sustainability as an important issue facing their community, but there has been limited action and staff time spent on these issues. Additionally, while most indicated that they have discussed implementing incentives or programs, a majority indicated that they aren't aware of feasible options, programs and projects that could be implemented.

Over 90% of respondents said they would like more information about ways to reduce energy use and over 70% indicated interest in participating with the Metro CERTs.

Mark Your Calendar

Neighborhood Sustainability Conference
Co-Sponsored by Metro CERTs
March 8, 2008



Climate Change in Minnesota
Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center
Jan 17, 2008

<http://www.livetheriver.org/eventDetail.asp?eventid=677>

[Lights Out America](#)

March 29, 2008

<http://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/events.html>

For more information on the other CERTs visit the statewide website at <http://cleanenergyresourceteams.org>