



Metro CERTs Network Created!!

OCTOBER 2007

By Carl Nelson & Diana McKeown, Green Institute

CERTs PARTNERS

University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships
The Minnesota Project
Southwest Regional Development Commission
Green Institute
Minnesota Department of Commerce

What is CERTs?

The Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) have effectively operated in the rural areas of Minnesota for over 4 years. The purpose of CERTs is to give community members a voice in energy planning by connecting them with the technical resources necessary to develop regional strategic energy plans and to identify and implement community-scale energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. CERTs are made up of regional teams of community members who together go through energy planning and organizing activities, host informative meetings and forums, and work together on clean energy projects all within their regional communities.

The CERTs approach is one of pragmatism and cooperation. It's a model for how tangible economic, social and environmental benefits can be achieved by reaching across traditional interest groups and taking a true, community-based approach. The CERTs program was organized through a partnership of the Minnesota Project, the University of Minnesota's Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, the Southwest Regional Development Commission, and the Department of Commerce.

This year the legislature provided funding to start a Metro CERTs network, and in August the Green Institute was selected by the Minnesota Department of Commerce to join existing CERTs partners and coordinate the creation of the Metro CERTs network.

How will the Metro CERTs Network operate?

Many Twin Cities neighborhood groups, community organizations and other metro-area residents are currently engaged in local clean energy efforts. The Metro CERTs Network will help connect, provide support for, and increase the effectiveness of these local efforts in conducting community energy planning and implementing community-scale energy efficiency and clean energy projects. The Metro CERTs organizers are currently assembling a steering committee to help guide the network. We anticipate starting to organize one or more network events in early 2008, and welcome input into what would be most helpful.

What are the goals of the Metro CERTs Network?

1. Create a network to support and encourage collaboration among Twin Cities community-based energy projects and planning efforts.
2. Provide organizing support to help local efforts get off the ground.
3. Connect local efforts with technical resources.
4. Help utilities achieve their energy efficiency and renewable energy goals.

CLEAN ENERGY RESOURCE TEAMS

helping Minnesota communities determine their energy future

METRO CERTS UPDATE

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

What is the CERTs track record?

Since its inception in 2003, CERTs have spawned networks, provided education and helped catalyze projects. Here are some of the milestones met by the CERTs program:

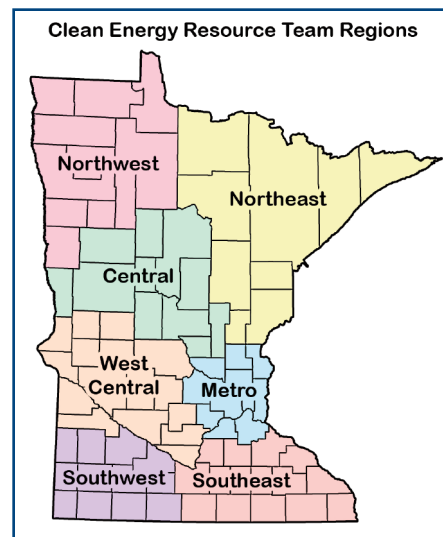
- In 2005, Regional Strategic Clean Energy Plans were created in each of the six rural CERT regions.
- In 2006, 17 new clean energy projects were catalyzed with mini-grants of \$1,000 or less, leveraging additional community funding and helping to create tomorrow's energy system in communities today.
- CERTs won the 2006 Minnesota Environmental Initiative's Partnership of the Year award for the diverse collection of stakeholders the project has mobilized.
- In 2007 CERTs was written into state statute. With current funding, CERTs will be able to award a total of \$300,000 in mini-grants for clean energy projects throughout the six greater Minnesota regions during 2008 and 2009. The legislature also provided for the expansion of CERTs to the Twin Cities metro area.
- The CERTs Web site, www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org, provides current information on projects, technologies, upcoming and past meetings.
- Over 1,100 individuals participate in CERT meetings and educational forums, and volunteer thousands of hours to the CERTs project.

Who is currently involved in the rural CERTs?

CERTs are comprised of 20-50 active participants in each of the six rural regions. Team members come from diverse backgrounds including farmers; utility representatives; municipal, county, state, tribal and federal government staff; educators and academics; small business owners and entrepreneurs; members of non-profit and environmental groups; elected officials; and individuals interested in energy issues.

Each CERT hosts team networking and informational forums including meetings, workshops and tours that are open to any and all interested persons. Forums generally attract between 20 and 70 people, depending on the meeting focus, and often include individuals who are new to CERTs.

CERTs also maintain regional list serves, a statewide Monthly Update list, and a website. Regional list serves network between 100 and 200 people per region. The Monthly Update list reaches over 100 people who are not a part of a rural team. Our website attracted over 25,000 new visitors between September 2006 and September 2007.



For more information about Metro CERTs visit our website or contact:

Diana McKeown
Metro CERTs Network Coordinator
Green Institute
dmckeown@greeninstitute.org
612-278-7125

Carl Nelson
Director of Community Energy
Green Institute
cnelson@greeninstitute.org
612-278-7117

www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org

CLEAN
ENERGY
RESOURCE
TEAMS

helping Minnesota
communities
determine their
energy future