

# West Central Clean Energy Resource Team Monthly Roundup :



Hi West Central CERT members,

Spring is here, the ponds and prairie potholes are opening up, and all across our region good things are happening. In New London, the [NL-S YES! team is building solar thermal panels](#) to help reduce the heating costs for the Little Theatre. In Montevideo [community members are learning about passive home construction](#) from architect Tim Eian as part of an ongoing series of presentations in conjunction with the [Hill Grocery House](#) project. The ACGC YES! Team [hosted an energy and environment fair for some 400 students](#), while community groups in both the [St. Cloud](#) area and [Stevens County](#) continued the work of long-term planning for sustainability. If you have stories or events to share about cool things happening in your community let's talk!

In this month's West Central CERT update, you will find information on upcoming events around the region, CERTs campaigns, the latest solar PV news, and information about how CERTs is helping communities connect. Thanks again for sharing, hosting, celebrating, and keeping the renewable energy conversation current for our region.

## Upcoming West Central Events for the month of March:

- **April 1<sup>st</sup>: Barnes Aastad annual membership meeting, Thursday April 1<sup>st</sup>, 10:00**  
**Conference Room, USDA-ARS ("Soils Lab"), 803 Iowa Ave., Morris**  
The USDA ARA invites you to be their guest for lunch following the business meeting and program.  
Please RSVP to Sue Dieter ([morrgm@info-link.net](mailto:morrgm@info-link.net)) if you plan to attend.

**Scott Johnson, president of Sustainable Oils and president of the North American Camelina Trade Association, will speak on camelina as a next generation biodiesel feedstock.**

### Agenda

9:30	Coffee & Cookies
10:00	Barnes Aastad Business Meeting
11:00-12:00	Presentation by Scott Johnson
12:00	Lunch

For more information on the Barnes-Aastad Soil and Water Conservation Research Association  
Visit: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/Business/docs.htm?docid=2855>

- **April 17<sup>th</sup>: Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center Earth Day Celebration, 8:00-1:00**

**A great opportunity to see solar PV, solar thermal hot water, solar hot air, wind and biomass technologies integrated in one site. Plus a whole “slough” of other activities.**

8:00 am to 10:00 am: **Free pancake breakfast**

10:15 am to 10:40: Live music: **"The Educators"**

10:45 to 11:10: **"Rain Gardens"** Judith Toth, Master Gardener

11:15 to 11:40 am: Live music: **"The Educators"**

11:45 am to 12:30 pm: **Youth Energy Summit Awards**

**Attractions:**

Free trees!

Water quality information for land-owners

Informational booths

Educational activities

Renewable energy demonstrations

Kid's activities: tie-dye and much more!

Climbing wall

Archery

Archaeology exhibits

Artifact identification

Flint-knapping demonstration

Youth Energy Summit (YES!) team exhibits

- **April 22<sup>nd</sup>: New London-Spicer YES! Team Earth Day Energy Rally, New London Little Theatre 7:00a.m.-8:00a.m.**

**The NL-S YES! Team will be unveiling the finished solar thermal panels on the south side of the Little Theatre, and celebrating with a local foods cookout including sausage and pancakes with real Minnesota maple syrup. The cost is \$5 with proceeds going towards the solar project. Come out and show your support.**

**Other highlights include:**

A question and answer session with builder/contractor John Duevel

YES! Presentation

Music

Information on farmer's markets, composting, worm bins, gardening, solar thermal, etc.

- **April 22<sup>nd</sup>: Alexandria Community Eco-Fair, Woodland Elementary School 4:00p.m.-8:00p.m.**

**The Community Eco Fair brings the benefits and excitement of the Living Green Expo) to residents of the Douglas County area.**

**The fair features exhibitors in:**

Energy Conservation

Land Stewardship

Water Quality

Greening your home

**Plus!:**

Highlights of student involvement/projects on being green

Local businesses share their efforts towards sustainable practices and products.

[The Earth Balloon!](#)

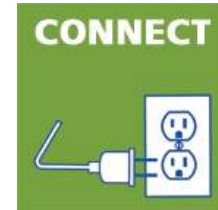
For More information contact Shelli-Kae Foster @320-491-1894 or [skgogreen@embarqmail.com](mailto:skgogreen@embarqmail.com).

## CERTs Campaigns:

- [Become A Wiser Energy Miser!](#) Power down your cold beverage vending machines to save energy and money. Did you know the average cold beverage vending machine costs about \$300 a year to operate. Did you know you can slash that number by up to \$130 a year with a vending miser. Do the right thing and save energy, order one (or 5 or 10) today.
- [Project GreenFleet.](#) Is your bus company or school district signed on? Learn how your fleet can be outfitted with diesel emissions equipment for free. Reduce emissions for healthier kids!

## Connect:

Have you checked out our [updated CERTs website](#) recently? We now have a cool feature that lets you connect to local citizen-led groups in our region. These are groups that are working to promote the use of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, helping us on down the path to energy self-sufficiency. Go to the website and click on CONNECT. If you know of, or are part of a group that would like to be listed, let us know.



## Looking ahead:

- Greening the Heartland 2010 conference, May 19th-21st.  
<http://www.greeningtheheartland.org/>
- *Save the Date* CERTs 2011 Conference, February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. St. Cloud Civic Center

Learn more about the CERTs 2011 conference and past events at [2011.MNCERTs.org](http://2011.MNCERTs.org).

## Let's talk solar:

Did you know that for many communities in West Central Minnesota solar electrical power has become more affordable than ever? In early March Xcel Energy announced their [Solar Rewards](#) program. When combined with state rebates and federal tax credits, the Xcel Solar Rewards program makes the cost of installing a PV solar system very affordable.

The following West Central CERT cities are totally or partially within Xcel territory:

Albany	Dassel	Holdingsford	Nicollet	St. Joseph
Avon	Echo	Kingston	North Mankato	St. Martin
Bird Island	Eden Valley	Lafayette	Osakis	Starbuck
Blomkest	Fairfax	Lake Lillian	Paynesville	Stewart
Brooten	Franklin	Lowry	Prinsburg	Villard
Buffalo Lake	Freeport	Maynard	Raymond	Waite Park
Clara City	Gaylord	Meire Grove	Renville	Watkins
Clarkfield	Gibbon	Montevideo	Richmond	Watson
Cold Spring	Glenwood	Morton	Rockville	Wood Lake
Cosmos	Granite Falls	New Auburn	Sacred Heart	
Courtland	Hanley Falls	New London	Sartell Spicer	
Danube	Henderson	New Munich	St. Cloud	

An up to date article that walks through the current costs of doing a solar project in Xcel territory in Minnesota can be found at [sunpluggers.com](http://sunpluggers.com).

Once again, thank you for all your efforts. Let's stay connected!

Jeff