

West Central Clean Energy Resource Team Monthly Roundup:



June 18, 2010

Helping Minnesota Communities Determine Their Clean Energy Future

Hello, West Central CERT members,

As we all have watched the gulf oil spill unfold, many of us are looking for answers. While questions of blame and responsibility abound, we as energy users are visibly confronted with the far reaching consequences of our personal energy choices. However, blame, grief and hand-wringing do not have to be the final word. The oil spill, and the conversations it brings forth, creates for us the opportunity to make local changes that will have a broad, long-term impact. These changes happen when we begin to ask: Can we build our buildings to use less energy to heat, cool and operate? Can we build communities in which walking to school, the grocery store, the clinic is a healthy and pleasant option? Can we use less energy by simply choosing to live more conscientiously? Can we generate more of our energy locally? The answer to these questions is, of course we can. We can do all these things and more, so let's get to it.

In this month's West Central CERT update, you will find out about: communities that are stepping up to the challenge of creating a sustainable future; upcoming events showcasing renewable energy projects and opportunities around the region; updates on CERTs campaigns; and opportunities for us all to get involved in the decision making that will determine what our energy future looks like.

Upcoming Events:

July 21st: Biobusiness Forum: Hear and share ideas in renewable energy and biobusiness

MinnWest Technology Campus Auditorium, Willmar

Please RSVP by 7/16/10

For more info and to RSVP: [Bioforum](#)

July 29th and 30th: West Central Renewable Energy Tour

The University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center is hosting a coach bus tour of community scale renewable energy systems located in West Central Minnesota including large-scale wind, biomass gasification, solar thermal and photovoltaic, anaerobic digestion, renewable hydrogen, geothermal, and green building technologies.

For more info and to sign up: [Renewable Energy Tour](#)

Vending Miser Update:

Thanks to all who helped us exceed our Becoming a Wiser Energy Miser campaign goals. The final tally showed 591 units ordered, 815,130 kWh saved, and \$65,210 in annual savings state-wide. The West Central region played a significant role with many participating organizations including:



- Meeker County
- Kandiyohi County
- Lac Qui Parle County
- Nicollet County
- Gustavus Adolphus College
- Ridgewater College
- University of Minnesota Morris
- Ortonville High School
- Rivers Edge Hospital and Clinic
- City of St. Peter
- USDA office Morris

A special thanks to Willmar Municipal Utilities who stepped up and instituted a rebate as well as ordering some Vending Misers. While the CERTs Become a Wiser Energy Miser campaign is over for now, there are still many fantastic utility rebates in place for those wanting to save energy and dollars.

Next up: GreenStep Cities

The Minnesota GreenStep Cities program will officially be launched at the League of Minnesota Cities Conference June 23rd and 24th, but a few West Central cities are already signed on. The Milan City Council passed a resolution June 1st becoming the first West Central town taking action to participate in the GreenStep program. On June 7th the City of St. Cloud passed a GreenSteps resolution as well. Congratulations to these cities, big and small, for forging the path to sustainability.

For more information on the GreenStep Cities program and to get your city involved visit:

www.mngreensteps.org

Nice Work!

Congratulations go out to all of those involved with the Youth Energy Summit (YES!) program. YES! was the winner of Minnesota Environmental Initiatives Award for Environmental Education at the MEI's annual banquet on May 27th.



More information on the Youth Energy Summit (YES!) program can be found at:

<http://www.swifoundation.org/yes.html>

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)

A jobs bills recently approved by the Minnesota State Legislature allows county and city governments to provide Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing. Through PACE financing, communities can provide homeowners with financing they are unable to obtain from commercial sources to make energy-related improvements (weatherization, solar installations, small wind etc.) to their homes. The homeowners then pay the costs as part of an annual assessment on their property taxes. Assessed financing for up to 20 percent of a property's value is allowed, and can be repaid over a 20-year period.

An overview of how Municipal Energy Financing has worked in other areas can be found at:
[Municipal Energy Financing: Lessons Learned](#)

Did you know?

- Minnesotans use enough coal annually to fill a train stretching from Duluth to New Orleans and back? Enough petroleum to make a layer 15 feet thick over Interstate 94 from Hudson to Moorhead – all four lanes?
- Residential refrigerators in the U.S. use the electricity of 25 large power plants each year?
- A crack as small as 1/16th of an inch around a window frame can let in as much cold air as leaving the window open three inches?

Mark your calendar:

CERTs 2011 Conference, February 2nd and 3rd. St. Cloud Civic Center
Learn more about the CERTs 2011 conference and past events at
2011.MNCERTs.org.

Thank you for making it happen,

Jeff

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WEST CENTRAL CLEAN ENERGY RESOURCE TEAM

Our Mission

West Central CERT wants to fundamentally change the way energy is produced and consumed in its region's communities and across the state. Its overarching vision is to use local resources to make both the region and the state energy self-sufficient.