

Southeast CERT 2012–2013 Seed Grants

Helping Minnesota communities determine their energy future

The Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) connect you and your community with resources to identify and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

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Southeast CERT awarded $10,000 worth of seed grants, catalyzing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects across the region.

Funding is provided by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources. Thanks to everyone who submitted a proposal. Learn more and see past projects at http://projects.mncerts.org.

Rural Renewable Energy Alliance – Quantifying Effectiveness of Solar Heat for High Tunnels

Rural Hastings, MN – The Rural Renewable Energy Alliance's project seeks to analyze and quantify the effectiveness of solar thermal to produce heat in high tunnels. Evidence of success remains anecdotal regarding the transfer of solar thermal heat to the soil and, consequently, increasing the growing season. RREAL's installation of monitoring equipment will better document how solar thermal applications perform, helping to formulate costs and benefits of solar systems. RREAL plans to create a solar thermal high tunnel calculator, sharing the application broadly. (Solar Thermal, Research: Renewable Energy; $3,000)

Ryan Family Dairy Farm – Energy Audit for Future Solar Project

Zumbro Falls, MN – Kimberly Ryan, a senior at University of Wisconsin – River Falls, seeks to better understand the energy operating costs at her family's dairy farm. This seed grant will support a portion of the costs of the technical assistance needed to complete an on-farm energy audit and lay the groundwork for both energy efficiency improvements and a potential solar power system. The results of this project will be shared with other struggling dairy farms, seeking to provide options for efficiency upgrades resulting in decreased energy costs. (Energy Audit, Low-Cost: Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy; $655)

Three Rivers Community Action – Northfield Neighborhood Investment Project

Northfield, MN – Three Rivers Community Action plans to pilot the Neighborhood Investment Project, a home energy improvement and neighborhood revitalization program that provides a one stop shop for residential energy efficiency upgrades available to homeowners of all incomes. From start to finish, the program will provide households with quality information, a full energy audit, a customized energy action plan detailing cost-effectives measures specific to each home, information and assistance with rebates, attractive and accessible financing opportunities, reliable contractors and quality assurance. Three Rivers is working with partner Community Action agencies to develop a regional and statewide plan for the program and will specifically plan and launch a Pilot for the program in a targeted neighborhood in Northfield. The Northfield Housing and Redevelopment Authority will be an active participant in the Northfield Pilot, providing an incentive for participation in the form of matching grant funds to low- and moderate-income homeowners to implement energy saving measures. (Energy Efficiency: Low cost/no cost upgrades, building envelope, lighting upgrades; Renewable Energy: Solar thermal, solar electric; Additional Technologies: Geothermal; $4,345)

Center for Renewable Energy Education and Demonstration – Discovering Science on the Range in the Field of Energy

Southeast Region – This cooperative effort involving the CREED Project, Hamline University's Center for Global Environmental Education (CGEE) and the Laurentian Environmental Center (LEC), is designed specifically for high/middle school teachers wishing to update their Energy Efficiency/Renewable energy industry knowledge and to then encourage their students to choose a future career in this field. Statewide Seed Grant funding for this project will support the equivalent of 9 teachers in Minnesota. (Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy and Additional Technologies; $2,000)