

*CASE STUDY:****Minnesota Power's Solar Sense Program***

Minnesota Power's Solar Sense program has not only participated in 13 solar installations since last May, they have also created a training program for installing and inspecting grid-connected solar photovoltaic (PV) electric systems.

When Christopher Reed of Reed Energy Inc. was hired to help create the solar rebate program as a part of Minnesota Power's Conservation Improvement Program, one major goal was market transformation. To account for many people who weren't familiar with inspecting and installing PV systems, a two day advanced PV installation training was offered for installers that wanted to participate in the Minnesota Power Solar Sense rebate program.

The first round of training turned out 26 installers, said Dean Talbott, Program Director for Minnesota Power. After Paul Moss offered the training in the Twin Cities, nearly 80 installers have been trained. Christopher LaForge of Great Northern Solar, one of the most experienced PV installers in the United States, ran the training.

"I think the number of trained installers is one of the biggest successes of this program," Talbott said.

The Solar Sense program provides a \$2,000 per kilowatt rebate (up to a maximum of

\$4,000) for Minnesota Power customers who install PV systems on a home, business or industrial facility. The program was designed to provide an extra incentive to the State of Minnesota Solar Electric Rebate Program, which provides a \$2,000 per kilowatt rebate for up to four kilowatts of grid connected solar energy. Customers must qualify for the State of Minnesota rebate program to take advantage of Solar Sense.

The two rebates combined cover about 40 percent of the system cost. The 13 Solar Sense installations will produce an estimated 34,000 kW hours annually, and will show that renewable energy systems are possible on normal, grid-connected homes.

"The beauty of PV is once it is installed correctly, it will be producing clean renewable electricity for decades," Reed said. "We're turning something that was once considered strange and experimental into something more mainstream and commercially available."



Community Energy

Clean Energy Resource Teams

To find out more about the requirements and incentives of Minnesota Power's Solar Sense program, visit www.mnpower.com/environment/solar_sense/

For more information contact:

Dean Talbott, Minnesota Power
218.722.5642 Ext. 2843
dtalbott@mnpower.com

Christopher Reed, Reed Energy Incorporated
218.496.5716
reedenergy@frontiernet.net

Christopher LaForge, Great Northern Solar
715.774.3374
gosolar@cheqnet.net