

## News Release

### Highlighting The Past, Energizing The Future

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Monday, August 1, 2005

The Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERT) share a bold vision: a clean energy future in Minnesota using innovative technologies and local resources. Each of the seven CERTs around the state have just released a strategic energy plan that lays out a path to make the most of their region's local resources like energy efficiency, wind, biomass and solar. Their vision is becoming reality, one project at a time.

These citizens hope to build the rural Minnesota economy using local resources and innovative 21<sup>st</sup>Century technologies to generate energy, keeping money at home and creating new local jobs.

Minnesotans spend over \$13 billion dollars each year on energy and most of it leaves our pockets and leaves the state, according to the Minnesota Department of Commerce.

Each of the six Clean Energy Resource Teams is a diverse group of citizens committed to building a cleaner energy system while building local economies. Participants range from farmers to utility representatives, from state and federal government staff to academics, individuals to small business owners, and members of non-profit groups.

The CERTs strategic energy plans, plan summaries, newsletters and project case studies are all available on the web page and on one comprehensive CD, "Highlighting the Past, Energizing the Future." By exploring the CD, you can learn how each regional CERT is moving toward a clean energy future by connecting citizens with technical resources. To find out more about a local Clean Energy Resource Team in your area, use the interactive CD to go to your area of the state, or browse the CD by topic areas. You can also find out more by checking out the CERTs website at [www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org](http://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org).

Read the Northwest CERT strategic energy plan summary or the statewide CERTs summary at <http://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/>

#### What clean energy projects are going on in your CERTs region?

**Central:** The Central CERT is working with building developers by providing them with resources to ensure that new buildings in the region are as efficient as possible. The team is also connecting people with organizations like Rural Renewable Energy Alliance (RREAL), which works to bring clean energy to people of all income levels. RREAL installs solar hot water heaters to help reduce energy bills for low-income households that qualify for federal heat assistance. The CERT hopes RREAL's program can be replicated in other communities. They are also supporting and promoting the work of the Central MN Ethanol Coop in Little Falls, which is transitioning its heating system from natural gas to biomass gasification.

"We will virtually be making a renewable fuel from a renewable fuel," said Kerry Nixon, General Manager of the Coop.

**Northeast:** Facilitating renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in area schools and communities will put more clean energy projects on the ground in Northeastern Minnesota, and will teach children to be more energy smart consumers in the process.

The Northeast CERT has been instrumental in jumpstarting demonstration projects at both the North Shore Community School and at the Proctor Public Schools. "The Northeast CERT will continue to be involved as we move beyond demonstration models to planning a building addition that will incorporate sustainable energy and education into our design," said BJ Kohlstedt, curriculum director at North Shore Community School.

**Northwest:** The Northwest CERT is focusing its efforts on opportunities to pilot onsite energy generation using a mobile biomass gasifier, which will allow local businesses to turn waste biomass into energy.

"Biomass gasification will be commercially available in a short period of time," said John Schmidt of the Pembina Resource Conservation and Development Council, "and CERTs is helping to make the connections that will make it happen."

**Southeast:** After evaluating their renewable energy resources, the Southeast CERT is preparing to launch an education and outreach campaign to share information and collaborate with citizens, utilities, schools, government officials, businesses and communities on clean energy projects. The team is confident that efficient use of energy and clean energy technology can meet the current and future needs of Southeast Minnesota communities.

"Community renewable energy projects such as the wind turbine at Carleton College in Northfield and our project to install energy-efficient lighting in Winona show what can be accomplished when citizens, power providers, and other parties come together, share resources and work together to achieve common goals," said Nancy Adams, member of the SE CERT Executive Committee. "We hope to form many such partnerships to develop similar projects across the region in the coming months to save energy and keep our energy dollars in our region."

**Southwest:** Wind development in Southwest Minnesota has already made the region a net exporter of electricity. The Southwest CERT and Rural Minnesota Energy Board are working to increase the use of biofuels and the number of locally-owned clean energy projects and make the region an exporter of renewable fuels.

"We are paving the way for a locally owned renewable energy industry in SW Minnesota," said Jack Keers, Rural Minnesota Energy Board Chair.

**West Central:** The West Central CERT is moving the concept of community-based energy to a new level. The team is exploring emerging energy technologies, such as evaluating a community digester facility in Morris, and simultaneously reaching out to both children and adults to educate them about energy in their communities. The 1.65 MW wind turbine at the University of Minnesota-Morris has created quite the buzz in the region. Clean energy is clearly gaining momentum, as new projects such as a 14 MW wind project in Grant County Wind and Big Stone Wind are moving forward.

The Clean Energy Resource Teams are a joint project of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, The Minnesota Project, University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, Rural Minnesota Energy Board, Metropolitan Counties Energy Task Force, and the Resource Conservation and Development Councils. The purpose of CERTs is to give citizens a voice in energy planning by connecting them with the technical resources necessary to identify and implement community-scale energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Funding is provided by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources from the U.S. Department of Energy Oil Overcharge Money, The Carolyn Foundation, The Blandin Foundation, Minnesota Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Energy, University of Minnesota Initiative for Renewable Energy and the Environment, University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships and the University of Minnesota-Morris Center For Small Towns.

Take a look at the enclosed local case studies, CERTs regional plan summaries and the CERTs statewide summary, or visit [www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org](http://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org)

#### Attachments

- Clean Energy Resource Team Regions
- Minnesota Dehydrated Vegetables Anaerobic Methane Digester
- Moorhead's Capture the Wind Success Story

## News Categories

[Miscellaneous](#)

[Tweet](#) [Like 0](#) [Share](#)

[News Home](#)

[News Archives](#)



Small Campus. Big Degree..

[Employment](#)  
[Events Calendar](#)  
[Academic Calendar](#)  
[Library](#)  
[Directories](#)  
[Maps, Directions & Parking](#)  
[Quick Facts](#)  
[Bookstore](#)

[Faculty & Staff](#)  
[Email & Calendar](#)  
[Contact Webmaster](#)  
[System Website](#)  
[Home](#)

2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716  
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | [umcinfo@umn.edu](mailto:umcinfo@umn.edu)

© 2021 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.  
The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.  
[Privacy Statement](#)

