

News Release

CERTs Awards Grant Funding Requests to Four Northwest Minnesota Projects

By Linda Kingery, Elizabeth Tollefson on Wednesday, September 3, 2008

Crookston, Minn. (September 3, 2008) – The Minnesota Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs), via the University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships and Southwest Regional Development Commission, recently announced the funding of a number of grant proposals. The funding will help provide financial assistance for energy efficiency and/or renewable energy projects requiring technical assistance.

The Northwest CERT Steering Committee awarded funding for the following four grant proposals:

LEEDing Crookston to a Sustainable Future

Students from the Natural Resources Club at the University of Minnesota, Crookston are poised to provide student leadership for a new residence hall on the campus to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified. This certification means that the construction of the building will take environmental concerns into account. To be LEED certified, buildings must be energy efficient and the materials used must be sustainably harvested. The \$8,000 grant awarded to Crookston campus will be used to educate students and staff about the benefits of LEED certification and also help explore other possible steps the campus could take to support sustainability. U of M Crookston seniors Chris Waltz and Erick Elgin submitted the LEED proposal, with help from David DeMuth, Jr. Ph.D., associate professor in the Math, Science and Technology Department at the U of M, Crookston, and campus liaison to the University's Sustainability Committee.

Straight Vegetable Oil (SVO) as a Fuel Source in Agricultural Production

The Agricultural Department at the University of Minnesota, Crookston was awarded \$5,000 for research project to find the best way to use straight oil from soybeans, sunflowers or canola in agricultural equipment. Several companies have developed kits that allow diesel engines to run on diesel fuel or SVO, and some operators are experimenting with blends of SVO and diesel fuel. The project will help support a research team consisting of students and faculty designed to assess current technology for dual fuel systems, test improvements and provide economic and operational guidelines for farmers interested in using straight vegetable oil. The proposal was submitted by Ron Del Vecchio, Ph.D., head of the Agriculture Department and Assistant Professor Paul Aakre.

Geothermal Projects for Marshall County Group Home Building & Warren Professional Building

A group home for physically disabled adults in Marshall County was awarded funding to update and renovate their building to include a geothermal heat pump to reduce the amount of energy used at the facility, and therefore reduce energy costs for the residents. The Warren Economic Development Authority is also constructing a professional building to house an eye doctor, dentist and insurance office and will install geothermal heating and cooling to keep the operating costs of the building down after construction. Both projects, each receiving \$5,000, are working with Dovetail partners to design the building to be green and energy efficient and to work with local contractors to educate them about energy efficient building techniques. The proposal was submitted by Karl Frigaard from the Northwest Community Action Agency.

The Clean Energy Resource Teams Project, started in 2003, is made up of community members across Minnesota who share a bold vision for Minnesota's energy future: to foster strong communities, to create local jobs and to develop clean and reliable energy from wind, biomass and solar power, among others. To learn more about CERTs, visit www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org.

Today the University of Minnesota Crookston delivers more than 25 applied-science undergraduate degree programs and 50 concentrations, including several online degrees, in agriculture; arts, humanities and social sciences; business; math, science and technology; and natural resources. To learn more, visit www.UMCrookston.edu.

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