

## Sustainability

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# Midwest Renewable Energy Association's Energy Fair



June 22, 2019 | Jaeger Moser

### **The 30th Annual Energy Fair in Custer, WI**

I recently had the privilege of attending the 30th annual Energy Fair located in Custer, Wisconsin. This outdoor fair, put on by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA), brought together over 10,000 people to discuss sustainability and how it can be achieved through a clean energy future. Featuring over 200 exhibits and workshops, as well as, keynote speakers, live music, great food, and an electric car show, this fair had something for everyone.

The highlight of the fair for me were definitely the workshops. These ranged between 15 different topics all taught by experts and professionals in their respective fields. Over the three days that this fair took place there

were only 16 workshop sessions meaning that you could only attend 16 out of the over 200 different workshops. As you can imagine this leads to people spending the better part of their morning and nights looking through their fair guides and stressing over which ones they most wanted to attend. Some of the most popular topics for the other attendees and I were Energy Efficiency and Conservation, Photovoltaics, and Alternative Construction and Green Building. The tent of any workshop covering one of these topics would be packed full of people. Most of whom were either professionals in the field, home/business owners looking for ways to run their buildings more sustainably, or people like me who are just trying to learn more about the clean energy field.

The most informational and useful workshop for me was titled "Wisconsin's Largest Rooftop Solar System and Solar Roadmap Planning for Schools". During which Dr. Kenneth A. Walz, director and principal investigator for the Center of Renewable Energy Advanced Technological Education at Madison Area Technical College, discussed the 1.85 MW solar array they have recently constructed on their roof. Through his discussion, he laid out the 10 step process he and his colleagues used to make this large array a reality.

Like many great things the Energy Fair was started by a group of friends sharing common interests and a common goal. It has grown a lot in both size and popularity since its debut in 1990. The first one, attracting a little under 4000 people, was a great success considering that the idea of clean energy was not nearly as popular back then as it is today. Due to its great success, the MREA was founded shortly after this first fair. Since its founding this organization has had the same mission to "promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living through education and demonstration". Hosting, planning, and promoting the Energy Fair is by far the best thing the MREA does to accomplish this mission.

Overall, my experience at the 30th annual Energy Fair was one I will not soon forget. Through the workshops and exhibits I learned, through the keynote speakers I was inspired, and through the music I was entertained. Being surrounded by so many people, all with different ideas but similar perspectives on clean energy was truly an amazing experience. I hope you all can join us next year, June 26th-28th, at the 31st annual Energy Fair!

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