

City of
Minneapolis
Climate
Change Grants

2010-2011

The 2010 City of Minneapolis Climate Change Innovation Grants saved Minneapolis residents and businesses thousands of dollars, prevented tons of carbon dioxide emissions and built lasting community connections.

*Prepared by the
Minneapolis
Sustainability Office
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Introduction

Starting in 2007, the City of Minneapolis has been empowering direct and immediate action by residents and businesses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the Climate Change Innovation Grant program. Community organizations, nonprofits and schools have used the grants to address climate change at a local level and inspire their communities to take action. The Climate Change Innovation Grants have also served to incubate pilot programs that have been expanded into larger efforts in the city, providing models for program design and delivery.

Supported by federal Recovery Act funding from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program, the 2010-2011 City of Minneapolis Climate Change Innovation Grants saved Minneapolis residents and businesses thousands of dollars, prevented tons of carbon dioxide emissions and built lasting community connections. From solar panels to spray valves, transportation passports to listening sessions, the grantees engaged local businesses, schools, neighborhoods, residents and communities in important conversations about energy and climate change that resulted in measurable actions.

Highlights

- The city funded 8 projects. \$74,000.00 was budgeted and \$73,472.52 actually spent (see Appendix 2).
- Grantees leveraged more than \$689,972.96 in additional funding, including in-kind contributions, donated staff and volunteer time and other grants, representing over 1,000% return on investment.
- The teams registered an additional 146 participants in the Minnesota Energy Challenge, to a new City of Minneapolis total team number of 9,538 members (see Appendix 3).
- Energy-saving and earth-friendly materials distributed included:
 - 2,700 Go-To bus cards
 - 300 compact fluorescent light bulbs
 - 134 high-efficiency faucet aerators
 - And other materials including: Nice Ride passes, high efficiency commercial spray valves, power strips, solar calculators and reusable shopping bags.
- Over 2,000 people attended events related to the grant projects and thousands more heard about activities and opportunities through social media, friends and other outlets.
- Volunteers contributed 1,024 hours of their time. These volunteer hours, combined with staff hours for each project, equal 2,564 hours dedicated to the successful execution of the grant projects.
- As with previous grant periods, many of the grantees made a commitment to continue their efforts after the grant period ends, and several grant projects are being expanded into larger programs by partner organizations.

The estimated greenhouse gas emission reductions resulting from these Climate Change Innovation Grant projects is over 4.3 million pounds of carbon dioxide – the equivalent of taking approximate 390 passenger vehicles off the road for a year (see Appendix 1).

Challenges / Lessons Learned

- Given the current economic climate, many homeowners and businesses faced time and budget restraints that created significant barriers to participating in renewable energy and energy efficiency programs.
- Generating attendance at workshops, presentations and informational sessions was challenging for all grantees.
- Almost all grantees had difficulty growing their Minnesota Energy Challenge teams; established teams felt they had already hit a saturation point, and business-based grants did not have as strong a connection.
- Deciding to conduct interviews with residents and developing a listening process took a significant amount of time, but, in the end, was extremely valuable in having the residents' "voices" at the table.

- The presence of translators for immigrant populations was crucial for outreach and communication efforts.
- A major challenge was relying too heavily on external consultants to advance efforts, especially when there is turnover. Successful projects should be housed within an organization and held and completed by staff members.
- While traditional media like newspaper ads did not generate a lot of action, innovative forms of marketing like compostable door hangers containing actual flower seeds produced more interest.
- Both renewable energy projects reported that a significant barrier was the constant threat of solar state rebate money being taken away, leaving many people feeling like there wasn't enough time to make a decision.
- It was difficult to "cut through the clutter" with new messaging around transportation options, as it was not as novel as solar or composting.
- Receiving free bus passes allowed people to try out public transportation without having to put any of their own money into it.
- Organized escorted bus ride opportunities did not generate any participation.
- Many businesses housed in older commercial buildings that were interested in solar photovoltaic discovered that they had structural limitations that would prevent solar installations without significant structural work, creating a powerful economic barrier to action.
- Successful partnerships with local contractors are mutually beneficial; contractors receive technical support when promoting energy efficient upgrades and partners become more knowledgeable about barriers to action.

Appendix 1 Grant Summaries

Aeon (Ward 7) *aeonmn.org*

Aeon's Sustainable Living Project aims to decrease water and energy consumption in affordable housing by building resident knowledge and fostering resident leadership that will produce long-term behavior change. This pilot project in partnership with Hope Community, Cummins Power Generation and the University of Minnesota specifically engaged residents in The Wellstone apartment building. Aeon began with detailed monitoring and analysis of energy and water consumption data, performed by Cummins, which informed a listening process including one-on-one interviews with a head of the household in almost half of The Wellstone's units. After determining the most important messaging for their population, staff and volunteers conducted ten two-hour informal outreach sessions with informational tables, held seven educational workshops and trained two resident leaders to perform home visits. This resulted in direct contact with an estimated 180 residents around energy efficiency.

Leveraged: A \$25,000 matching grant from Enterprise. A total of 836 hours invested in the project, including 169 billable staff hours, 48 additional hours of staff time not covered by the grant and 648 volunteer hours. 19 members joined their Minnesota Energy Challenge team, pledging to save 88,238 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions and \$3,791 annually.

City of Lakes Waldorf School (CLWS) (Ward 6) *clws.org*

The CLWS team had three objectives: to develop their Minnesota Energy Challenge team, promote alternative modes of transportation and to become an affiliate of the Metro Clean Energy Resource Team (CERT). CLWS has a long-standing tradition to hold a "Bike-a-thon" fundraising/community building event each October; in addition, they held three Alternative Ways to Work or Bike Walk Week events to encourage families to carpool, take mass transit or bike/walk to school. To facilitate alternative transit CLWS provided a carpool map in the front lobby,

provided bike trail maps and many volunteers helping students cross busy roads, counting carpoolers and assisting first time bikers. These events resulted in a total of 1,200 car trips not taken during the grant period. Due to the transition of consultants, the goal to become a Metro CERT affiliate was not met.



Cyclists at City of Lakes Waldorf

Leveraged: \$9,709 in matching monetary and in-kind support. A total of 460 hours invested in the project, including 396 staff hours and 64 volunteer hours. 97 new families signed onto the Minnesota Energy Challenge. Energy-saving actions from this grant are expected to prevent at least 427,913 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions and save at least \$30,000.

Eureka Recycling Food Service Energy Leadership Program (All Wards) *eurekarecycling.org*

Eureka's grant project aimed to educate local restaurants, grocery stores and convenience stores about the economic benefit of energy efficiency retrofits and assist them in completing upgrades to their businesses. Eureka also provided skills training opportunities to contractors to assist in these retrofits. 85 contractors and business owners attended an education workshop, which led to 30 businesses taking action to reduce energy waste in their

buildings. While Eureka included information about the Minnesota Energy Challenge and links to their team, they found it to be less useful for businesses as it is primarily geared towards homeowners.

Leveraged: \$9,389.56 in matching and in-kind donations. Awarded \$783 in Xcel Energy's efficiency rebates for 12 projects. A total of 211 hours invested in the project, including 101 staff hours funded by the grant, 90 matching staff hours and 20 volunteer hours. Three members joined their Minnesota Energy Challenge team, pledging to save 21,339 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions and \$904. Energy saving actions from this grant are expected to save an estimated 472,337 kBtus of energy and 199,421 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions.

Kingfield Neighborhood Association (Ward 6) kingfield.org

Currently there are very few solar photovoltaic (PV) flat roof type installations on Minneapolis small businesses. This grant project focused on assisting local business with overcoming barriers to installing solar PV systems at non-residential sites. Kingfield met with a group of experienced local solar installers and energy experts to better understand the particular challenges and existing resources for businesses considering solar PV, and created resources based on those conversations to demystify the bidding and installation process. Kingfield arranged and paid for solar assessments for six buildings in Minneapolis, and energy audits from Xcel Energy on three of those buildings to help them qualify for Xcel Energy solar rebates. They also contributed funds to assist for necessary structural assessments for Quality Coaches and Twin Town guitars, which installed 25 kW and 28 kW solar PV systems respectively.

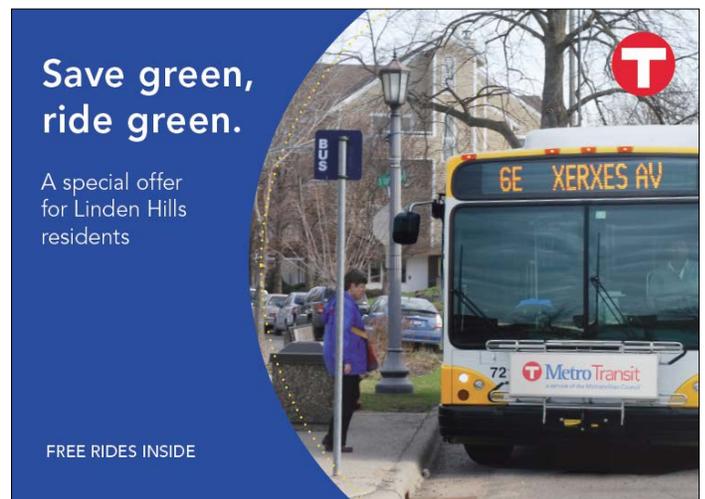


Solar panels waiting to be installed at Twin Town Guitars

Leveraged: \$529,529 in matching and in-kind donations. A total of 402 hours invested in the project, including 297.5 staff hours, 30 volunteer hours and 75 hours spent by participating businesses meeting with the solar reps and assessing their options. The two PV installations are expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2,675,181 pounds of carbon dioxide, and the accompanying efficiency improvements to the buildings are estimated to save an additional 378,584 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions over the next ten years.

Linden Hills Power & Light (Ward 13) lhpowerandlight.org

Linden Hills Power & Light (a previous Climate Change Innovation Grant recipient) turned their attention to encouraging residents of the Linden Hills neighborhood to use public transportation. In collaboration with Metro Transit, Linden Hills Power & Light sent a direct mail piece to approximately 2,600 homes in the neighborhood that contained a reusable Go-To bus card that had been pre-loaded with \$10. In addition to the mailing, they also distributed a further 100 Go-To cards at neighborhood events. Their mailing garnered a 22% redemption rate and resulted in a total of 5,323 total bus rides through July 31st. In addition, twenty people added value to their Go-To card, showing continued use of public transportation. Metro Transit is expected to be



rolling out this model to other communities in the near future.

Leveraged: \$34,854.40 in matching and in-kind donations. A total of 120 hours invested in the project, including 80 staff hours and 40 volunteer hours. Based on an average trip on the main bus route through the neighborhood, the total rides from this promotion are estimated to save 12,242.9 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions.

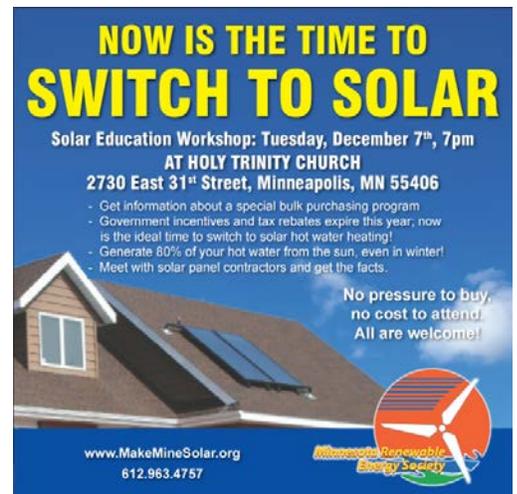
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce (All Wards) minneapolischamber.org

At their Greening Your Business Expo, the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted two free educational workshops for local businesses on energy efficiency programs and resources. Approximately 100 business leaders attended. The program agenda included presentations from local energy experts, a significant amount of time for question and answers and a structured networking period. From surveys distributed after the workshops, 54% of attendees reported scheduling a building energy audit, 25% secured a low-interest loan or energy rebate for efficiency upgrades, and 40% participated in Xcel Energy’s One-Stop Efficiency Shop small business lighting retrofit program.

Leveraged: \$71,376.45 in matching or in-kind donations.

Minneapolis Renewable Energy Society (MRES) (All Wards) mnrenewables.org

MRES used their grant to promote their Make Mine Solar- solar thermal bulking purchasing program through a series of 8 educational workshops on solar photovoltaic, solar hot water and solar hot air applications for homeowners. MRES promoted the workshops at farmers markets, newspaper ads and compostable door hangers containing seeds. The workshops generated a total of 137 attendees, 63 of whom went on to receive site assessments for solar (5 were commercial site assessments). The project resulted in 6 solar hot water systems (11 panels total) and one air heating system (2 panels) installed on properties. This program was presented nationally at the American Solar Energy Society’s 2011 Solar Conference and at other regional events. Based on their experience, MRES is rolling this program in other parts of the state in 2012.



Leveraged: \$8,925 in in-kind and matching donations. A total of 385 hours invested in the project, including 250 staff hours of 135 volunteer hours. Over the estimated 30 year lifetime of the installed systems, they are projected to save approximately 585,000 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions.

Northeast Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce (Ward 5) minneapolischamber.org

The primary goal of this grant project was to distribute information about energy efficiency programs to small and mid-sized businesses in the North Minneapolis area using a variety of mediums including mailings, meetings, events, email, social media, print media, surveys and one-on-one visits. Information was distributed to 468 businesses, 130 Chamber members, 65 faith organizations and 15 neighborhood groups over the grant period. Staff estimates that Chamber members saw a reference to energy efficiency programs at least 16 times through the grant cycle. 54 individuals representing 41 companies attended an “It’s Not Easy Being Green – Or Is It?” informational session with

local energy experts. Three businesses who attended the informational session later scheduled audits with the One-Stop Efficiency Shop small business lighting program.

Leveraged: \$1,190 in volunteer hours and in-kind staff time. A total of 178 hours invested in the project, including 141 staff hours covered by the grant, 15 hours in-kind staff time and 22 volunteer hours. 8 members joined their Minnesota Energy Challenge team, pledging to save 84,952 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions and \$5,372.

Appendix 2 Financial Overview

2010 Climate Change Grant Financial Overview

Organization	Final grant amount		In-kind and leveraged	Staff hours	Volunteer hours	Total hours
Aeon	\$10,000.00		\$25,000.00	169	648	815
City of Lakes Waldorf	\$7,640.02		\$9,709.00	396	64	460
Eureka Recycling	\$9,090.00		\$9,389.56	191	20	211
Kingfield Neighborhood Organization	\$9,836.00		\$529,529.00	298	95	393
Linden Hills Power & Light	\$9,986.90		\$34,854.40	80	40	120
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce	\$9,000.00		\$71,376.00	-	0	-
Minnesota Renewable Energy Society	\$9,969.60		\$8,925.00	250	135	385
Northeast Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce	\$7,955.00		\$1,190.00	156	22	178
Total	\$73,472.52		\$689,972.96	1,540	1,024	2,564

Appendix 3 Minnesota Energy Challenge Results¹

Organization	New Members	CO ₂ savings, lbs/yr	\$ savings/yr
Aeon	19	88,238	\$3,791
City of Lakes Waldorf	97	427,913	\$28,907
Eureka Recycling (Food Service Energy Leadership Program Team)	3	21,339	\$904
Kingfield Neighborhood Organization	4	772,401 ²	\$64,620
Linden Hills Power & Light	6	786,613 ³	\$79,090
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce	0	0	\$0
Minnesota Renewable Energy Society	9	160,054	\$10,615
Northeast Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce	8	84,952	\$5,372
TOTAL	146 Members	2,341,510 lbs CO2	\$193,299

¹ The Minnesota Energy Challenge (www.mnenergychallenge.org) is an online action guide and free pledge for Minnesota residents. All Energy Challenge statistics in this report are taken from the Energy Challenge website, and are based on pledged actions and the average Minnesotan's energy use and as such are estimates.

² Kingfield's savings are based on their total Energy Challenge team, which has 129 members

³ Linden Hills Power & Light's savings are based on their total Energy Challenge team, which has 109 members