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UMM garners Green Power Award

Summary: UMM and the City of Morris are partnering in a variety of significant renewable and alternative energy projects.

(November 7, 2005)-The University of Minnesota, Morris and the City of Morris are doing a lot of significant work in the area of renewable energy.

This fact was evident to Lowell Rasmussen, associate vice chancellor for physical plant and planning at the University of Minnesota, Morris, and UMM student Nick Peterson when they attended the National Green Power Marketing Conference held recently in Austin, Texas.

"We're leaders in this area," said Rasmussen. "The conference underscored the variety of activities that are going on in renewable and alternative energy."

"There is a mentality among UMM students to support renewable energy," said Peterson, who, now as director of the Student Legislative Coalition lobbied the Minnesota Legislature to fund the biomass facility at UMM when he served as a member of the Student Legislative Advocacy Committee. In addition, in his role as renewable energy development assistant at the West Central Research and Outreach Center, Peterson coordinated the logistics and program information for the wind turbine dedication ceremony last spring.

UMM was honored October 24 as a recipient of a 2005 Green Power Leadership Award for its commitment to on-site generation of renewable energy. The annual awards, presented during the Conference, are sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the Center for Resource Solutions (CRS) to recognize organizations whose actions help advance the development of the nation's green power market. (To see the full list of 2005 Green Power Leadership Award Winners go to [.](#)

"We are pleased to be recognized with this award," added Rasmussen. "It is further confirmation by many that we're doing the right things. Our partnership with the WCROC also meets University of Minnesota President Robert Bruininks' initiative for a sustainable campus."

The Green Power Leadership Awards for green power purchasers is a component of the U.S. EPA's Green Power Partnership, a voluntary program providing technical assistance and public recognition to organizations that switch to green power for a portion of their electricity needs. Partners in the program include Fortune 500 companies, universities, institutions and state, local and federal agencies. The purchaser awards fall into three categories: On-site Generation, Green Power Purchasing and Green Power Partner of the Year.

The On-site Generation award received by UMM recognizes organizations that distinguish themselves by using impressive on-site renewable energy applications including, but not limited to, solar photovoltaic (PV) and wind energy projects. This year a panel of eight judges reviewed nearly 70 nominations based on criteria ranging from the amount of

renewable electricity purchased or generated to each organization's strategy for incorporating green power into its operations and communications.

"We applaud UMM for its environmental leadership," said Kurt Johnson, director of EPA's Green Power Partnership. "The University is providing an outstanding example for others to follow."

Rasmussen and Peterson also noted the emphasis that is placed on the promotion of renewable energy. "Wind is a dominant source right now," said Rasmussen.

The conference demonstrated that a major source of renewable energy promotion is via the sale of renewable energy certificates. If one does not have access to renewable energy sources, one can purchase the certificates. Proceeds from the sale of the certificates goes toward developing renewable energy somewhere in the U.S.

In March 2005, the first large-scale wind turbine at an American public university began generating power. Located 1.5 miles east of UMM near the West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC), the 1.6 megawatt turbine provides approximately 50 percent of the campus' electricity needs. In addition to on-site generation, the University also purchases wind energy from Otter Tail Power Company's Tailwinds Program to power the UMM Student Center. Students helped enable the wind power purchase by participating in an energy conservation program to reduce the campus' electricity, water and waste needs.

"We greatly appreciate the assistance of Otter Tail Power Company and the West Central Research and Outreach Center," said Rasmussen.

In 2006, UMM and the WCROC plan to construct a biomass gasification heating plant capable of producing heat for 80 percent of the school's campus. In addition, UMM faculty is integrating green energy research into the classroom and academic environment. These ongoing initiatives will allow for research and advancement in the areas of biomass consumption and efficiency while creating green power development models for rural communities.

What is Green Power?

Green power is electricity generated from environmentally preferable, renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal, biogas and low-impact hydro and biomass resources. These renewable energy sources are cleaner than traditional sources of electricity that generate carbon dioxide (CO₂), a greenhouse gas linked to global warming, and other air pollutants. Green power purchases support the development of new renewable energy capacity and projects by increasing the overall demand for power from renewable resources.

Additional information about the Green Power Partnership and the Green Power Leadership Awards is available at <http://www.epa.gov/greenpower/>.

About the U.S. EPA's Green Power Partnership

The Green Power Partnership is an EPA voluntary program that standardizes green power procurement as part of best practice environmental management. Partners in the program switch to green power for a portion of their electricity needs in return for EPA technical assistance and public recognition. The Green Power Partnership currently includes more than 600 Partners including Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, trade associations and universities — collectively purchasing over 3 billion kilowatt hours of green power annually. Additional information is available at <http://www.epa.gov/greenpower>.

About the U.S. Department of Energy's Green Power Network

The Green Power Network is the nation's premier Web site providing green power market information. The Network's Web site provides up-to-date information on green power providers, product offerings, consumer protection issues, and policies affecting green power markets. It also includes a reference library of relevant papers, articles and reports. The Green Power Network is operated and maintained by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) for the U.S. Department of Energy. Additional information is available at <http://www.eere.energy.gov/greenpower>.

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