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UMN Morris Achieves Carbon Neutrality in Electricity

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[UMN Morris Achieves Carbon Neutrality in Electricity](#)

The campus is now fully carbon neutral in electricity because of on-site clean energy systems.

This year the University of Minnesota Morris achieved a new milestone in its journey toward complete campus carbon neutrality. The campus is now fully carbon neutral in electricity because of on-site clean energy systems.

Over the past decade UMN Morris has built an on-site, community-scale, clean energy platform. [In 2019 Environment America recognized that UMN Morris produced the most on-site electricity per student in the United States.](#) The majority of campus power, about 60%, is generated by two University of Minnesota-owned 1.65 megawatt wind turbines. Additional green electricity is generated by several solar photovoltaic systems and a back-pressure steam-turbine at the biomass gasification plant.

UMN Morris worked with Otter Tail Power Company (OTP) to achieve campus carbon neutrality goals. About 70% of campus electricity comes from renewables, including what the campus produces and purchases from OTP. OTP, too, is expanding its renewable portfolio and expects to achieve 30% renewable energy generation, and carbon emissions 30% below 2005 levels, by 2022.

The two wind turbines produce over 10 million kilowatts of power each year. The campus uses about half of the wind-generated electricity, and the other half supplies the local power grid. In partnership with OTP and support of private giving from donors and friends, the campus now owns additional renewable energy credits (RECs) in an amount equal to the fossil-fuel produced electricity the campus purchases. The RECs are generated from the UMN wind turbines.

“Achieving carbon neutrality in electricity is an important milestone for our campus,” says Chancellor Michelle Behr. “This is an accomplishment not only for the faculty and staff who have helped inspire our campus energy journey, but also and especially for the students who have played a leading role in helping to develop our energy plans, energy monitoring, analysis, and more.”

“We’re proud to take another step with the UMN Morris on their energy journey to achieve both Morris Model and carbon neutrality goals,” says OTP’s market planning manager, Jason Grenier. “For decades our partnership has produced clean, low-cost energy solutions through numerous energy efficiency projects, renewable projects, and recently bringing the first electric vehicle charging station to Stevens County. We look forward to continuing our energy journey with the campus with many more innovative projects in the future.”

Campus carbon neutrality efforts are also part of a larger community initiative called the Morris Model, which is a partnership to expand sustainability efforts across the Morris community. Morris Model partners are working to produce more clean power in Stevens County. To learn more, visit morris.umn.edu/sustainability.