

STEAM

The monthly newsletter of the local Sustainability Team*

For July and August 2010

Compiled by Jason Kauffeld, Green Lake County UWEX

**STEAM meets the first Tuesday of every month from 2-3pm in the demo room of the County Courthouse in Green Lake. The meeting is an open discussion of current projects, ideas for the future, and a sharing of advice and lessons learned.*

Next meeting is Tuesday, September 7 and is open to all. Please come and contribute!

EDUCATION/ HOW TO / TRAINING

Minnesota GreenStep Cities program:

<http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/bestPractices.cfm>. This is a program of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (and five partner agencies) that has identified 28 best practices (in five topical areas) and an associated list of 163 "unique actions." The site outlines the process for moving through the "steps" of becoming a GreenStep City.

An example of this type of program at the national level is ICLEI's STAR Community Index: <http://www.icleiusa.org/star>. This framework gauges the sustainability and livability of communities.

BUILDINGS

["Green roof takes on vibrant hues,"](#) Superior Telegram, Aug. 6.

A year after it was installed, the "green roof" on the University of Wisconsin-Superior's Yellowjacket Union is healthy and its sedum plants are giving it a distinctive red and green hue. A green roof is a thin layer of soil mixture and plants that cover a building's roof instead of conventional roofing materials...

["Habitat for Humanity planning low-income eco-village in River Falls,"](#) Pioneer Press, July 31.

Habitat for Humanity is planning an eco-village — the first of its kind in the nation — to provide environmentally friendly, affordable housing in River Falls, Wis...In addition to the recognition, said Cain, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, the project would also involve students and faculty from the school. The project will serve as a case

study for students and will give them hands-on experience in the field, said Cain, who teaches sustainable development courses...

BUSINESS and EMPLOYMENT

["Community college training for managing green jobs,"](#) New York Times, Aug. 25.

Beyond "green-collar" jobs, like retrofitting a home to conserve energy or helping build a wind farm, an energy-conscious economy will need a new generation of environmentally smart managers, and that's where community colleges are stepping up with new courses and degree programs. The federal government is pouring \$500 million into training for green jobs, and the sector devoted to energy efficiency is estimated to grow as much as fourfold in the next decade, to some 1.3 million people, according to the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory...

["Going green: UW-Madison program helps businesses be eco-friendly,"](#) Wisconsin State Journal, Sept. 2.

A new UW-Madison program to evaluate and promote sustainable business practices is helping Wisconsin companies earn recognition for going green, cutting waste and being socially responsible...That's why the goal of Eggert's Green Masters Program is as much to publicize the successes of company participants as it is to provide a viable framework for those actions...

["Oshkosh company banking on big things from tiny nanoparticles,"](#) Oshkosh Northwestern, July 13.

A small, nearly-invisible Oshkosh company is poised to make huge leaps in energy storage capacity thanks to the small, nearly invisible particles it creates. Oshkosh Nanotechnology LLC plans to use ceramic nanomaterials it makes in labs at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh to help expand energy storage capacities in high-tech batteries called supercapacitors. Dr. Charles Gibson, a chemistry professor at UWO since 1992, hopes to spin the company off from the university soon to spur business development and high-tech job creation in Northeast Wisconsin...

ENERGY

["MATC keeps current with the sun,"](#) The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Aug. 1.

When it's completed later this month, the MATC Photovoltaic Educational Laboratory on the east side along the Milwaukee River will become the largest solar installation in the state...The \$7.1 million solar panel project will be a research center for students at MATC, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and other engineering schools.

New Power Capacity from Renewables Tops Fossil Fuels, SustainableBusiness.com News
<http://www.sustainablebusiness.com/index.cfm/go/news.display/id/20692>

In 2009, for the second year in a row, both the U.S. and Europe added more power capacity from renewable sources such as wind and solar than from conventional sources like coal, gas and nuclear, according to twin reports launched today by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21). Renewables accounted for 60% of newly installed capacity in Europe and more than 50% in the USA in 2009. This year or next, experts predict, the world as a whole will add more capacity to the electricity supply from renewable than non-renewable sources.

"[Local researchers working to develop non-fossil fuels](#)," Wisconsin State Journal, July 18. Troy Runge holds what could be America's energy future in his hands -- and it looks a little like dog food...Runge's work is part of a broader initiative on campus to develop renewable energy sources, and he is on a team of faculty that will work in the new Wisconsin Energy Institute building...

"[Audience applauds end to coal at Charter plant](#)," Wisconsin State Journal, Aug. 11. Compliments far exceeded complaints at a hearing Wednesday night on a plan by the state and UW-Madison to rebuild the Charter Street Heating Plant, eliminating the use of coal and replacing it with natural gas and Wisconsin-grown alternative fuels such as wood chips and switch grass. Nearly 100 people attended the hearing on the final version of the environmental impact statement for the \$250 million project. Though the plan will bring some challenges for the neighborhood around the plant — more train traffic and noise, for example — most comments at the hearing focused on the positives of getting rid of the dirty pile of coal that now towers over North Mills Street. In fact, when Al Fish, head of facilities and planning management for the UW-Madison, mentioned that no coal will be burned at the plant a year from now, the audience erupted in applause...

The University of Tennessee has just released a nice report on the **state of wood as a fuel**. It looks at everything from supplies to processing to conversion technologies. Here's a link: Wood2Energy <http://www.wood2energy.org/StateofScience.htm>

"[UW-Oshkosh building gets geothermal heating, cooling](#)," WBAY-TV, July 6. UW-Oshkosh is pushing forward with new and innovative ways to go green on campus, including a new, 40,000-square foot building that will utilize something no other U.W. school has. UW-Oshkosh's new advising center will be the largest building in Northeast Wisconsin to feature a ground source, geothermal system...

<http://www.wisconsintechcouncil.com/newsroom/inside-wi/>

PSC Approves Proposed Wind Siting Rules

On August 9, 2010, the Wind Siting Council (Council) submitted to the Public Service Commission (PSC) its [final recommendations for uniform wind siting rules](#). The Council was formed by [2009 Wisconsin Act 40](#) (Act 40), which created a policy framework for uniform local regulations of wind energy systems in Wisconsin. Act 40 directed the PSC to promulgate rules to specify maximum restrictions that a municipality can impose on installation and use of wind energy projects throughout Wisconsin.

Renewables Made Up Half of New Power Installed in U.S. Last Year

A new study by the [Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century \(REN21\)](#), a UN-backed organization, found that in 2009, half of [new power generation capacity](#) built in the U.S. was in the form of renewable energy. And we're not alone. In Europe, renewables accounted for 60 percent of new power generation capacity in 2009, and globally, renewables now comprise 25 percent of power capacity and delivered 18 percent of the world's electricity in 2009. China has made the greatest strides by adding 37 GW of renewable energy and leads the world in the manufacturing of both solar panels and wind turbines. Though these numbers are exciting, renewables still only account for a small fraction of total electricity produced in the U.S. [We have a long way to go](#), but at least we're heading in the right direction.via [Inhabitat](#): <http://ecogeek.org/component/content/article/3232>

FOOD

"[How stuff works: Organic food prices](#)," Seattle Times, Sept. 1.

...If you are moving in an organic direction, here is a common question: Why do organic fruits and vegetables cost more than "normal" fruits and vegetables?...The University of Wisconsin is one place that has done research, actually growing different crops organically and conventionally and comparing the results...

"[Study: Growing more veggies could profit Midwest](#)," Channel 3000, Associated Press, May 7.

A new study shows that if Midwest farmers raised more of the fruits and vegetables eaten there, they could create thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in income. The Iowa State University study found that if farmers in six Midwestern states raised enough of 28 crops to meet local demand, they could create \$882 million in sales, more than 9,300 jobs and about \$395 million in labor income. Michelle Miller, of the University of Wisconsin, said other regions of the country could see similar benefits if they also grew food to meet local demand...

www.growingpower.org Growing Power is a national nonprofit organization and land trust supporting people from diverse backgrounds, and the environments in which they live, by helping to provide equal access to healthy, high-quality, safe and affordable food for people in all communities. Growing Power implements this mission by providing hands-on training, on-the-ground demonstration, outreach and technical assistance through the development of Community Food Systems that help people grow, process, market and distribute food in a sustainable manner.

HEALTH

*****No articles this issue*****

SUSTAINABILITY

Site Selection magazine ranks Wisconsin among top 10 'sustainability' states

Site Selection magazine's inaugural Sustainability Rankings, based on eight criteria that track green industry projects, places Wisconsin among the nation's top 10 states. The [report](#) was published in the July edition of the magazine.

http://www.siteselection.com/issues/2010/jul/GreenG_SustainRank/

["University bans plastic bottles from vending machines,"](#) Vending Times, July 14.

The University of Wisconsin has banned the sale of beverages in plastic bottles through vending machines on its Stevens Point campus. Its new vending contract, which takes effect this fall, calls for vending machines to be stocked exclusively with drinks in aluminum cans. The only exceptions are for products like sports drinks that are only available in plastic bottles...

["UWO a charter participant in sustainability rating system,"](#) Oshkosh Northwestern, Aug. 26.

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is participating in a new program to encourage sustainability in all aspects of higher education. The program, called the Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), is administered by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). To date, nearly 230 higher education institutions have registered as STARS Charter Participants...

["UWO ranked 35th nationally for sustainability efforts,"](#) Oshkosh Northwestern, Aug. 24.

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh continues to be recognized as one of the nation's leading green campuses. This week, the Sierra Club released its annual Cool Schools

rankings, based on the “greenness” of participating universities. UW Oshkosh ranked 35th in the nation...

TRANSPORTATION

["UW-Madison: Transportation Services to go by bike,"](#) WisBusiness, Aug. 31.

Transportation Services at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is putting a suggestion into action this month by downsizing at least one of its vehicles from four wheels to two. Transportation Services staff from the Commuter Solutions and Field Services teams have been working together to add a bicycle to the Field Services fleet. The suggestion to use a bicycle instead of a vehicle was made at a recent campus forum...