



Champion Report Template

Theme Area: Energy

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REPORTING PERIOD: September 2016 – December 2016

Goals/Strategies or Action Steps:	What NEW success have you had in moving your theme goals forward over the reporting period?
<p>El Energy in our Region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The low-income community solar project for Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe is commissioned! This is the first community solar project to have ever been fully incorporated into energy assistance in the nation, and this first community solar project in tribal lands as well. This project received coverage from WIRED magazine and Microsoft Philanthropies: www.wired.com/2016/10/how-to-bring-solar-energy-to-low-income-families - RREAL has hired three new solar installation technicians from the Leech Lake Tribal College to assist with the community solar project at Leech Lake as well as additional projects that RREAL is spearheading. These new team members are being supported partially by the Initiative Foundation! They are starting their clean energy careers with RREAL and are now on the arc of becoming electricians. - RREAL has provided the Paws and Claws Animal Rescue and Resort with a new 40kW solar electric system to ensure that the operating costs remain low and resources can be dedicated to the important service of caring for our furry, four-legged friends. - The Solar for Schools project is nearing the signing of a grant contract with Xcel... Any day now! The project team is working with two UM students to conduct surveys and interviews, gather research data, and compile information on best practices to create a compilation of successful strategies. A final report will be used throughout Minnesota to better understand and share on the ground experiences to inform similar types of projects. - Lots of other amazing projects have been developed here in our region, but the actual project sites have been outside of the region. - The Walker Area Community Center (Cass County) recently received a 32 kW PV system to stabilize energy costs at the facility. The system was fully funded by the Minnesota Power due to a consent decree with the EPA. Region 5 and RREAL helped identify municipalities that could benefit from a solar deployment and Walker and Hewitt were identified as key beneficiaries. Both systems are on-line and have the Resilient Region process to thank for their systems. its effectiveness in reducing traditional consumption.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shortly after receiving a Central CERT Seed Grant, the Lutheran Church of the Cross (LCC) in Nisswa, MN installed a 7.56 kW ground-mounted photovoltaic system last summer. This system not only saves the church 10% on their electricity costs, but also educated their youth and demonstrated the benefits of renewable energy to their community to ensure environmental stability and sustainability. - On November 21 In Little Falls, the Clean Energy Resource Teams hosted representatives of nine different Municipal and Cooperative Electric providers for an expert panel discussion on Community Solar Gardens. Case study results from a collaborative effort with CERTs and a U of M student researcher were shared, and many questions were answered and encouragement provided for utilities in all stages of the CSG adventure.
<p>Increase energy efficiency</p>	<p>-CLC was a recipient of a grant to construct a Deep Winter Greenhouse (DWG) from RSDP. They will be a part of a research project measuring output based on design and location. Construction should begin this coming spring/ summer. The DWG technology uses passive solar design to capture solar heat and store it in an underground rock bed. This heat is returned to the greenhouse when needed, heating soil and plants to minimize use of fossil fuels.</p> <p>- SAVE the DATE for the next CERTs Conference: March 28th and 29th, 2018!</p>
<p>What future activities has your theme prioritized for the coming year?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two groups on CSG. One was in BPU territory. One was in MN Power Territory. - Low income access common theme. - Getting projects going in different utility territories. - Biomass - education on use of biomass for energy. Identify communities. Outreach, education and tours. Broader understanding of options 	