

ENERGY TIDBITS

January 2007

Federal Tax Incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy will be extended for one additional year — through Dec. 31, 2008 — as part of a tax bill passed during the closing hours of the 109th Congress. President Bush is expected to sign the measure into law. The production tax credit (PTC) for wind and other renewable energy technologies will provide a 1.9 cent/kWh tax credit for electricity generated over the first 10 years of a project's operation. Tax incentives for new homes, commercial buildings, and solar energy systems were also extended for one year. Congress did not include the credits for upgrades to existing homes in the extension.

Neahtawanta Inn has been certified at the Steward level for the Green Lodging Michigan program. The Neahtawanta Inn has implemented many environmental initiatives at their facility such as purchasing local products and using organic air fresheners. "We also follow sustainable gardening practices by composting and using mulch rather than chemical pesticides which are toxic to our environment, especially because we live right on Grand Traverse Bay," said Bob Russell, innkeeper at Neahtawanta. "And, by being more energy and water efficient, our utility bills are drastically lower than comparable-sized B&Bs that don't implement such initiatives." <http://www.oldmission.com/inn/>

National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) has issued special guidance for project contractors and designers on the commercial building tax incentives available under the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The NEMA document provides sample language and examples for how the required IRS certification letter can be prepared. <http://www.nema.org/gov/efficientbuildings/>

Joel Wiese, Indigo Financial, our local champion of energy efficient mortgages made the Dec. 4 issue of Newsweek. Joel is mentioned in a Jane Bryant Quinn article on green homes.

Lauri Venøy wants to use the product created from liposuction to develop bio-diesel. More than 60% of Americans are overweight and the Norwegian's firm in Miami, FL is in the process of signing an agreement with US hospital giant Jackson Memorial. This deal would give Venøy & Co. around 11,500 liters of human fat a week from liposuction operations, which is enough to produce about 10,000 liters of bio-diesel. "Maybe we should urge people to eat more so we can create more raw material for fuel," Venøy said.

10 kW Photovoltaic Grants will be available to public agencies and non-profit organizations on a competitive basis. Two grants that will pay for up to 90% of PV equipment costs up to a maximum of \$50,000 will be available. Grantees will pay the balance of equipment costs, installation costs, and costs related to project management and education activities. The deadline is April 6, 2007. To obtain the Request for Proposal contact Roger Doherty at dohertyr1@michigan.gov or (517) 241-6224.

House Bill 4647 sponsored by Rep. John Moolenaar has passed the Michigan legislature. The bill would amend the Single Business Tax Act to provide taxpayers that own and use a wind turbine with a credit against the tax. The credit would be equal to 1.5 cents/kWh generated in the tax year. The credit would be available for tax years beginning after December 31, 2006 and before January 1, 2008. A taxpayer will apply to the Energy Office for approval of the credit. Total of all credits cannot exceed \$3 million per calendar year and credits for any one taxpayer cannot exceed \$750,000 for a tax year.

New Homes in Spain must be equipped with solar panels to provide up to 70% of hot water, under new regulations. New commercial and institutional buildings will have to install solar PV panels to generate some of their electricity.

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Green Builder College has been launched by the publishers of Green Builder Magazine. The curriculum has 10 modules of web-based training. www.greenbuildermag.com/college/

Micro Combined Heat & Power system in Bernard Malin's basement turns natural gas into hot water to heat his home and generates \$600-\$800 worth of electricity a year. Micro-CHP is an advanced hybrid of existing technologies: an internal-combustion engine generator married to a high-efficiency home furnace. In Japan, more than 30,000 homeowners have installed micro-CHP systems driven by internal-combustion engines made by Honda. In Britain, where the systems look like dishwashers and sit under kitchen counters, 80,000 systems made by a New Zealand company are on order. At least 5 companies are building micro-CHP systems worldwide. Two are trying to enter the US market: Marathon Engine Systems plans to bring a 4 kW hot-water system to the US in 2007. Climate Energy has developed a 1 kW forced-hot-air system that marries a high-efficiency furnace to a Honda generator.

2.5 kW Wind Generator owned by Christine and Sam Simonetta in Deerton (near Marquette) produced over 100% of their electricity for October and 107% for November. The Simonettas have a very energy efficient house and use about 200 kWh's per month.

DTE Energy has filed the GreenCurrents program with the MPSC. For \$2.50 a month, customers can purchase 100 kWh's of renewable energy. Customers could also have 100% renewable resources for an additional cost of two cents/kWh. DTE Energy plans to issue a Request for Proposal for new, Michigan-based renewable projects. The company then expects to enter into long-term agreements with developers. DTE Energy hopes to begin offering the GreenCurrents program early next year, pending approval by the MPSC.

<http://efile.mpesc.cis.state.mi.us/cgi-bin/efile/viewcase.pl?casenum=14569>

TheRenewablePlanet.com provides interactive maps and search features to access details about renewable energy projects. The web site gives visitors the opportunity to add their project to the growing database of projects. TheRenewablePlanet.com includes a map of renewable energy projects, a community forum, newsletter, a resource center and the project up-loader.

<http://www.therenewableplanet.com/>

Michigan Biomass Energy Program (MBEP) is now seeking proposals from non-profit and public organizations for state projects that expand markets for energy and fuel derived from Michigan biomass resources. MBEP plans to award multiple grants of up to \$24,950 per project. Proposals are due to the Energy Office by 5:00 PM on Friday, March 9, 2007. To obtain the Request for Proposal contact tonsors@michigan.gov.



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