

ENERGY TIDBITS

December 2006

Michigan Renewable Fuels Commission had its first meeting on November 30. Established through Public Act 272 of 2006, the public-private commission will recommend strategies that Governor Granholm and the state legislature may implement to promote Michigan's production and distribution of alternative fuel. The first meeting featured Suzanne Hunt, Biofuels Project Manager for Worldwatch Institute. The 7 bill package that created the Commission also reduced the gas tax by 36% on fuel that contains ethanol and by 20% on biodiesel blends; provided grants to service station owners who renovate or expand their existing stations to make E-85 and biodiesel available; and allowed for the creation of new agriculture renaissance zones to help spur additional ethanol and biodiesel plants. The Governor has also called for the state to have 1,000 biofuel pumps available by 2008. For more information visit <http://www.renewablefuelscommission.org/>

2006 Elections had energy related initiatives. California's Prop 87, which would have established a tax on oil companies to fund alternative energy research, was defeated. Boulder, Colorado, passed the nation's first carbon tax. The tax, estimated at \$1.33 per month per home, will be used for energy efficiency and renewable energy. State of Washington passed Initiative 937 requiring large utilities in the state to source 15% of their power from renewable resources by 2020.

Sustainable Energy Series: The Dollars and 'Sense' of Renewable Energy will be held on Saturday, December 9, 1 - 4 pm at Upland Hills Ecological Awareness Center in Oxford. Contact: 248-693-1021, info@uheac.org, or www.uheac.org

Steve Hamstra, GMB Architects Engineers, has been named by the international Association of Energy Engineers as the Region III (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin) Energy Engineer of the Year. Steve was the first engineer in Michigan to receive LEED AP (Leadership in Environment and Energy Design Accredited Professional) status. He also earned his designation as Certified GeoExchange Designer and has been instrumental in the design of 1.8 million sq.ft. of new and renovated facilities with geothermal heat pump systems. Steve was influential in the formation of the West Michigan Chapter of the US Green Building Council, and he served on the Board during the critical first year. He has also served on the Board of the Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association.

Renewable Resources could produce 25% of the electricity and motor vehicle fuels used in the United States by 2025 at little or no additional cost if fossil fuel prices remain high enough and the cost of producing renewable energy continues falling in accord with historical trends, according to a RAND Corporation study. <http://www.rand.org/news/press.06/11.13.html>

Houses That Work Seminar will be held on December 12, 8 am to 4 pm at the Kellogg Conference Center, MSU. Contact: <http://www.eeba.org/housesthatwork/default.htm>

Training Modules for Energy Efficiency Remodeling are now available. With DOE funding, the NAHB Research Center, Southface Energy Institute and Oak Ridge National Lab developed 8 training modules. Organized by project type, (e.g., kitchen, bath, additions), this new offering outlines techniques, materials, and technologies. A marketing brochure is also available to help explain energy efficiency to remodeling customers. Course materials are available for download <http://www.toolbase.org/Design-Construction-Guides/Remodeling/energy-efficient-remodeling>.

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Updated Resource Assessments for the 21st Century Energy Plan for capacity need forum, energy efficiency, alternative energy technologies, and renewable energy resources are available at <http://www.dleg.state.mi.us/mpsc/electric/capacity/energyplan/index.htm>

Automation Alley's office building in Troy now has 31 kW's of solar electric laminates installed by S.U.R. Energy Systems. The majority of the more than 200 laminates were installed on Uni-Solar's Solar Flat System, a ballasted rack that sits on flat commercial roofs. 27.7 kW's feed a 30 kW SatCon inverter which is connected directly to the building's 480V panel. 1.6 kW's of the laminates power office lights through Nextek Power Gateway lighting controllers. These controllers use the DC current from the solar to run DC lighting. This results in more usable power as the electricity does not have to be converted to AC by an inverter and then back to DC by a ballast in the light fixtures. The Nextek Gateway also has input from the utility and/or batteries to run the lights when the solar is not generating. Another set of Nextek Power Gateway's channel 1.6kW's of solar power to a small off grid inverter that powers critical computer loads. Both the lighting system and the data backup have Cobasys Nickel Metal Hydride batteries for backup power when the utility is down. <http://www.automationalley.org/autoalley/Tech+Center/About+the+Tech+Center/>

Intermediate Solar Heating Seminar will be held on December 9, 9:00-4:00 at the GLREA Energy Demonstration Center in Dimondale. Contact: www.glrea.org or 800-434-9788

Green Building Standard Committee has been formed by U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC); American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE); and Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA). Standard 189P, the minimum standard for high-performance green building, is scheduled for completion in 2007. The proposed standard will apply to new commercial buildings and major renovation projects and will address items such as sites, water use, energy efficiency, impact on the atmosphere, materials, and indoor environmental quality. The committee hopes the language of 189P will eventually be written into building codes. The newly formed committee met in Seattle in August to outline next steps, which include the scheduling of two development meetings before the end of the year.

New Energy Education Program Directory on the Energy Office website lists higher education programs including construction trades, alternative energy, alternative fuels, energy efficiency etc. www.michigan.gov/energyoffice Upper left green menu, click on "Resources." Under "Energy Education", click on "Energy Education Programs Directory."



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