

## ENERGY TIDBITS – March 2009

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes \$16.8 billion for the DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. The funding is a nearly a tenfold increase. \$5 billion will go towards the low-income Weatherization Assistance Program and the act also increases the eligible income level and increases the funding ceiling to \$6,500 per home. \$2 billion goes toward grants for the manufacturing of advanced battery systems and components. \$300 million will support an Alternative Fueled Vehicles Pilot Grant Program and \$300 million will support rebates for energy efficient appliances. \$3.2 billion will go toward Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants for states, local governments, and tribal governments. \$3.1 billion will go toward the State Energy Program for a variety of purposes. To help states implement the measures, a separate portion of the act allocates \$500 million to the Dept. of Labor to prepare workers for careers in energy efficiency and renewable energy. [www.michigan.gov/recovery](http://www.michigan.gov/recovery)

The tax section of ARRA keeps the wind energy Production Tax Credit in effect through 2012, while keeping the PTC alive for municipal solid waste, qualified hydropower, and biomass and geothermal through 2013. The PTC provides a credit for every kWh produced at new qualified facilities during the first 10 years of operation. For 2008, biomass, wind, solar, and geothermal earned 2.1 cents per kWh while other qualified facilities earned 1 cent per kWh.

ARRA increased energy tax credits for homes and businesses. For homeowners, the act increases a 10% tax credit for energy efficiency improvements to a 30% tax credit, eliminates caps for specific improvements (such as windows and furnaces), and instead establishes an aggregate cap of \$1,500 for all improvements placed in service in 2009 and 2010. For residential renewable energy systems, the act removes all caps on the tax credits, which equal 30% of the cost of qualified solar energy systems, geothermal heat pumps, small wind turbines, and fuel cell systems. For businesses and individuals buying electric vehicles, the act simplifies and expands the available tax credits. For vehicles converted into qualified plug-in electric vehicles, a 10% tax credit is available through 2011, with a cap of \$4,000.

Consumers Energy is asking the MPSC to let it try out a solar power purchase program that might be described as a “feed-in tariff.” The program would allow homeowners and businesses to sell their solar power to the utility at a set price. Consumers has proposed to pay 65 cents/kWh for residential customers and 45 cents/kWh for commercial customers in 2009 and 53 cents/kWh for residential customers and 38 cents/kWh for commercial customers in 2010. Consumers’ program would have a cap of 150 kW per customer and a total cap of 2 MW. It would also charge participants \$25 per month and be limited to 12 year contracts. The proposed program would help the utility meet its Renewable Portfolio Standard requirement.

2nd Annual Michigan Energy Conference will be held at Ferris State on April 16-17.

Guest speakers include Paul Proudfoot, MPSC, Jeff Goody, Vestas, Bill Harper, Chevron Energy Solutions, Michele Buckler, FTC&H, Stephen Hamstra, GMB Architects Engineers, and Dan Radomski, NextEnergy. [www.ferris.edu/mec](http://www.ferris.edu/mec)

Hastings Public Library has become the first library in Michigan to receive Gold LEED certification. The library has a roof garden and rain garden to process water runoff from the building and parking lot. Recycled and sustainable materials appear in the carpeting, chairs, desks and wall coverings. Furniture from the old library was refurbished and reused. The library staff continues to promote sustainability, providing educational opportunities for the public and developing an outstanding sustainability circulating collection. In the fall of 2008 construction of the facility was completed with the addition of nearly 7 kW of PV solar panels. For more information, contact Evelyn Holzwarth at 269-945-4263 or [eholzwarth@hastingspubliclibrary.com](mailto:eholzwarth@hastingspubliclibrary.com).

4<sup>th</sup> Annual Earth Day Expo will be in downtown Rochester on Sat. & Sun., April 18th & 19th. The Expo is moving to main street and will offer many fun, informative, & earth-friendly activities including: 150+ green & wellness exhibits, presentations, food, farmer's market, kids' corner, films, entertainment, prizes, sustainability tours, free yoga and massage, and a community-building Connections Cafe'. There is no charge. [www.earthdayexpo.org](http://www.earthdayexpo.org)

Kalamazoo Valley Community College will become a first-of-its-kind national training center for wind technicians who will work on utility-sized turbines and on the smaller commercial units (50 kW Entegriety) like the one recently installed on the Texas Township campus. Beginning in October, KVCC will launch a 26-week training academy based on European standards for technicians. During the first 9 weeks, participants will complete a pre-employment electrician apprenticeship program. The next 14 weeks will cover wind-turbine-technician competencies. The last 3 weeks will be spent in a practicum on a wind farm. The college will also have a one-year certificate program that KVCC will begin in summer 2009. KVCC will also become the US work force development headquarters for Entegriety Wind Systems and will educate their sales and service personnel in marketing of its products, and certify workers in the installation, commissioning, operation and maintenance of its 50-kW, 145-ft turbines. For more information, contact DeHaven at (269) 353-1280 or [jdehaven@kvcc.edu](mailto:jdehaven@kvcc.edu).

Great Lakes Wind Council has been created by Governor Granholm. Executive Order 2009-1, creates the advisory body within the Department of Energy, Labor, & Economic Growth to provide citizens with a public forum to begin to identify where wind energy systems may be prudently sited in the Great Lakes. In addition to looking at ways to best engage citizens in a public dialogue about offshore wind, the council will identify criteria that can be used to review applications for offshore wind development. The council will also identify criteria for mapping areas that should be excluded from offshore wind development and those areas that are more favorable for such development, providing a full report to the Governor by September 1, 2009.

GM Executives are saying that early versions of the Chevrolet Volt electric car are getting the promised 40 miles on a single battery charge, thanks in part to new low-rolling resistance tires and a specially designed sound system. Goodyear Tire will make tires for the Volt with a new polymer compound that gives them 27% less rolling resistance than more conventional tires. In addition, the Volt's Bose sound system will use only half the electricity than a conventional sound system.

Renewable Schools Request for Proposals for up to \$5.5 million has been issued by the MPSC. Non-profit or public organizations can propose to design and coordinate the successful installation and operation of small scale, on-site renewable energy systems and energy efficiency upgrades at public and private K-12 schools, community colleges, & universities. The grants are funded by the Low-Income & Energy Efficiency Fund. .Deadline for proposals is 5 p.m. on Friday, March 13. [www.michigan.gov/mpsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mpsc)

7<sup>th</sup> Annual Renewable Energy Conference will be held at the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute in Hastings on Saturday, March 21, 8:30 am - 4 pm. The break-out sessions will highlight green building practices, renewable energy for homes and businesses, and career opportunities in renewable energy. A display area will allow participants to interact directly with vendors and non-profit organizations. [www.cedarcreekinstitute.org](http://www.cedarcreekinstitute.org)

Michigan Saves Request for Proposals has been issued by the MPSC. Up to \$8.1 million is available for the creation of a statewide energy efficiency and renewable energy financing system called Michigan Saves. The grant will be used to develop the administrative structure for the program, and to create a trust fund that will serve as an initial capital pool to finance the installation of energy efficiency measures with no up-front cost. Proposal deadline is 5 p.m. on Friday, March 13. [www.michigan.gov/mpsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mpsc)

Google is announcing Google PowerMeter, which will ultimately become an open platform for home energy information. PowerMeter is currently in internal beta testing. About four dozen Google employees have home energy monitors to record their power usage and their iGoogle home pages show them how much energy they are using. Underneath the PowerMeter gadget is an open systems platform that Google equates to Google Maps, the highly successful geospatial system that has become the foundation for thousands of applications.

Michigan Agri-Energy Conference will be held at Kalamazoo Radisson on March 30-31. Farmers, service providers, rural & agricultural leaders, researchers, & state policy makers will learn about the latest trends in renewable energy. [www.agri-energy.info](http://www.agri-energy.info)

Dow Corning has announced an agreement to purchase more than 14,000 megawatt hours of wind energy through Consumers Energy's Green Generation program, making Dow Corning one of the largest private purchasers of renewable energy in Michigan. The energy purchased through this agreement is equivalent to nearly 100% of the electrical load at Dow Corning's headquarters. Dow Corning, a leading provider of materials to the solar and wind energy industries, also announced that it is investigating the installation of a solar array at its corporate headquarters.

Green Today, Jobs Tomorrow conference will be held on May 11 at the Lansing Center. The conference will focus on workforce and economic development for Michigan's emerging green economy. Van Jones (founder and president of Green For All and the author of The Green Collar Economy), Sen. Stabenow, and Kate Gordon (Co-Director of the Apollo Alliance) will speak. [www.michigan.gov/greenjobsconference](http://www.michigan.gov/greenjobsconference).

Novi-based ITC, the company that owns much of Michigan's power grid, has announced the "Green Power Express," a network of new transmission lines to move 12,000 MW of power from wind-abundant areas in the Dakotas, Minnesota and Iowa to Midwest load centers such as Chicago & Minneapolis. The entire project is currently estimated to cost approximately \$10 to 12 billion. <http://www.thegreenpowerexpress.com>

Adam Bearup of Hybrid Homes and Eric Hughes of Image Design will be the Residential Green Building Advocates for the USGBC West Michigan Chapter. Their roles are to develop ideas for reaching out to home owners, home builders, architects, realtors, city departments and all parties involved in the design and construction of residential buildings. Both Adam & Eric are nationally recognized green leaders in their respective fields and were involved with West Michigan's first LEED for Homes Platinum project and were founding members of the LEED for Homes Circle Committee.

Association of Energy Engineers West Michigan Chapter will meet on March 16, 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm, FTC&H, 1515 Arboretum Drive, Grand Rapids. "Green House on Watson", an energy case study of a Silver Certified LEED for Homes residence will be presented by Dr. Shirley Fleischmann of GVSU. The house includes solar domestic hot water, 2 kW grid-tied PV system, a well designed thermal envelope along with other green features. Information/registration: Mark Zoeteman, [mrzoeteman@ftch.com](mailto:mrzoeteman@ftch.com).

Energy Tidbits is free and is prepared by John Sarver, Michigan Dept. of Energy, Labor, & Economic Growth. To subscribe, contact [sarverj@michigan.gov](mailto:sarverj@michigan.gov).