

Minnesota Energy Consortium Spring Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 21, 2022

9:00 AM

Introductions

Energy Sector Projects Panel

Energy Academy - Bruce Peterson

Working with Xcel Energy, Center Point Energy, and Minnesota State Community & Technical College, Wadena campus, to establish customized offering powerline and gas utility substation programs. These will be accessible to the metropolitan residents via busing to and from Xcel's Riverside and Hugo facilities. The interest is to recruit underrepresented populations, minorities, and female students. The goal is to launch the powerline program in August and the substation program in October 2022 with a targeted enrollment of 18 students in each program. This will be an accredited program through the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system.

NE Minneapolis Training Center – Jamez Staples

The Regional Apprenticeship Training Center (RATC) is located at 1200 Plymouth Ave in Minneapolis. Among others, their focus is on training for emerging careers and sustainable development technologies including energy efficiency, home energy audits and weatherization, solar, energy storage, smart grid technologies, construction trades and sustainable systems. The Renewable Energy Partners envision something similar to the Rochester Career and Technical Education Center (CTECH) where high school students can take courses that transfer into some of the college programs at RCTC and/or earn a C.N.A. or Safe Serve certifications. The Center has received two grants: MN HF #1270 and SF 1259, and a *Good Jobs Challenge* grant for \$13.9 million in partnership with Century College and other industry partners.

MN West Customized Offering for Solar Certificate – Judy Tebben

A customized offering of the solar photovoltaic certificate is currently underway with full enrollment for Minnesota West Community & Technical College. This program was offered to 2nd-year electrician students from the following colleges: MN West Canby & Jackson campuses, Ridgewater Willmar and Hutchinson campuses, and Minnesota State Wadena campus. The students completed their first 3 credits in an on-line format the second half of the spring 2022 semester. They will be taking their lab courses May 16 – June 7 at the MN West Canby campus. On June 7th, they will have earned both their 2-year electricians' degree and their solar installation certificate. This pilot program was offered to the students free of charge, including housing. Industry partners have donated some needed equipment and many will offer a "lunch & learn" at the Canby campus. This project was also funded through Perkins funds, MN West Student Senates from Canby and Jackson, and from the Minnesota State Energy Center of Excellence.

Energy Transition Panel

Xcel Energy

Bridget Dockert

XCEL Energy's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) was approved by the MN Public Utilities Commission. The IRP focused on key areas including retiring the last of Xcel's coal plants by 2030, building out their solar and wind energy resources, keeping the Monticello nuclear plant operational until 2040, and continue to use natural gas facilities to assure a reliable and stable electric system. Xcel is working on the development of two new transmission lines from their Sherco (Becker, MN) and King (Bayport, MN) sites. These lines will reuse valuable interconnection rights for their customers. They are developing a plan for supporting employees of these plants and provide transition training to their employees. A challenge is maintaining the workforce through the final day of production. While maintaining relationships with the communities, Xcel is also focused on renewable energy sources and plan for 1,300 MW of solar by 2026, 600 MW of solar and 2,150 MW of wind – or equivalent combination – between 2027 and 2032. In addition, DEED will administer a program that will have approximately 250 graduates work on the solar build at the Sherco plant.

Otter Tail Power

Nate Jensen

Otter Tail Power Company is the smallest investor owned company which is about 1/10th the size of Xcel. Their service area includes 50% western MN and 50% Dakotas in which there are a lot of regulatory challenges. They have 130,000 customers in 70,000 square miles with the 400 communities averaging less than 400 people in each. They are very spread out. They have retired the Hoot Lake coal plant and lost many employees due to retirement, transition within the company, and others just left. That plant was replaced with a natural gas combustion turbine for reliability needs during peak time and weather. In order to replace the energy, they built a wind farm and are building a solar facility while using the existing interconnections. They have also filed their IRP as well. With solar and wind already installed, they are looking to add an additional 150 MW solar in 2025.

Dept of Employment & Economic Development

Carla Vita

Carla is the new Director of Energy Transitions and leads the recently formed Energy Transitions committee for the state. This committee was formed due to the eight coal plant closures in the state. These have a huge impact on the community and its residents as well as the tax base. When the Becker plant is taken off-line it will have 70% tax impact for that city. We're learning from other states that have gone through or are going through this transition, and the committee was formed to find ways to help these communities transition better. The first meeting of this group will occur on April 29, 2022.

Working Groups and Engagement

*Industry Promotion and Outreach

*Social Media/Industry Engagements

Team members: Kaitlyn Simon, Stacy Cook, Arbor Otolara-Fadner, Pete Wasberg, Krista Benjamin, Logan Schrader

Will meet: Quarterly

GOALS:

1. Shared Dates/ Calendar/Content ops/ sharing Careers in ENERGY Month
 - a. Every month

MILESTONES:

Teams Group/DRIVE—how to deliver general knowledge—get connections, events, podcasts

Find ways to work smarter to tell our story

1. Social
2. Generation method
3. Career
4. Events
 - a. Self-authorship, web models for pathways: Twin Cities PBS (TPT) or Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimension of Identity (RMMDI)
5. Lake Area Technical Institute: Energy program, curriculum,
6. Heat pumps: You Tube, Mpls. Community & Technical College uses content with HVAC, road maps, literature pathways.....DO IT TODAY??

*Recruitment & Retention Strategy for Internships/Apprenticeship

Team members: Jim Houston, Ivan Maas, Nancy Wallace, Akisha Everett, Kyle Ault

Will meet: Quarterly; Tuesdays & Wednesdays do not work for Akisha

RECRUITMENT:

1. Define what we are solving for--what is the problem? RECRUITMENT
2. Increase interest across the board
3. Define recruitment process for the industry
4. Having more diverse individuals during recruitment events
5. Target student organizations within schools for recruitment
6. Work with schools to develop Energy clubs for students

7. Find mentors within the industry to go to schools to engage with students.
8. Partner with Career & College Readiness Institutions that support young professionals
9. Develop a clear roadmap/pathway that highlights different roles within the industry.
10. Utilizing-Expanding rodeos--highlighting some aspect of work--pole climbing, heavy equipment simulation
11. Expand Energy Week
12. Providing resources to remove barriers---Transportation/Food
13. Find those that don't know about industry---how to?

RETENTION:

1. Changing work culture
 - a. Recruitment strategies
 - b. Providing needs for different groups (prayer rooms, lactation rooms, etc)
 - c. Cultural awareness/competency
 - d. Avoid culture "fit" --more culture "add"
2. Creating career pathways--Xcel Energy Career Launch programs (Rotational)
3. Creating benefit package that is competitive
4. Stay interviews----(in addition to exit interviews--while still employed, interview why they stay)
5. Competitive pay.

***Define Energy Pathways on MN Dept of Ed Career Wheel**

Team: Jack Kluempke, Jason Kaasovic, Carla Vita, Rose Patzer

Will meet: Meet Quarterly

Define Topics:

1. Develop training pathways; use MN State programs as a guide
2. Define Energy (Green Jo)

Continuity

1. Cross pollination
2. "Wheel" should be a sphere—pie shape is limited

Demand response—can we even find one industry that doesn't use energy??

Segment larger umbrellas into categories

Pie is too definite/not fluid nor cross-sectional; sectors cover more than one discipline

Right to repair legislation is a barrier

Can't fix what we have i.e. stove, cellphone

School House Rock

1. Pioneer TV-->School House Rocks-----instead "Energy Rocks" segments
 - a. Showcase kids working on energy projects
2. YouTube opportunities

Energy transformation--> Pathways

***Coordinated Energy Industry & Education Connections/School Visits**

Team Members: Judy Tebben, Roger Hoffhein, Tom Cascalenda, Aaron Sandifer

Will meet: Unsure at this time

Bridging the gap between employees and training programs

1. Invites to job/career fairs
2. Hard to find private company buy in
3. CDL, powerline and gas training--give real world examples, be up front of pros and cons of jobs.—ex. 350' climbs etc.
4. Possible collaboration between industry leaders
 - a. Training/donate instructor or course work
5. Employers looking for better avenues to recruit
6. Outsourced recruiting--from afar. Out of state= out of touch—try to get direct contact with students

Conclude