

**METROPOLITAN COUNTIES
ENERGY TASK FORCE**

*Anoka County
Chisago County
Dakota County
Hennepin County*

*Ramsey County
Scott County
Sherburne County
Washington County*

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Minnesota counties tour renewable energy projects in SW Minnesota

Commissioners from the Metropolitan Counties Energy Task Force and the Rural Minnesota Energy Board are touring the Buffalo Ridge wind energy corridor in southwest Minnesota. The tour will showcase wind farms and biodiesel and ethanol fuel production facilities in southwest Minnesota.

This will be the first opportunity many commissioners have to visit wind farms that produce electricity and climb inside a wind turbine to see how it works. The tour will include several meetings for commissioners to talk with their colleagues from rural Minnesota and with wind developers about the direct benefits of wind energy development for Minnesota. Commissioners will learn directly about opportunities and challenges to generate electricity from wind.

The Rural Board and the Metro Task Force are evaluating opportunities to develop wind-energy by combining attributes of counties with significant wind resources to develop with counties with large electric loads. The two groups have established a joint committee to work towards the development of a 120 to 150-megawatt wind energy project at sites to be determined in southwestern Minnesota.

"Rural and metro Minnesota will benefit from a joint effort to develop wind power that harnesses natural energy in the windy parts of our state and delivers clean, sustainable electricity to communities that need it," said Hennepin County Commissioner and Metro Energy Task Force member Peter McLaughlin. "Finding the cooperative means to develop a wind energy project between the Metro Counties Energy Task Force and the Rural Energy Board is a fabulous opportunity to produce clean, renewable energy that benefits both rural and urban Minnesota."

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“Investing in wind energy in southwestern Minnesota will not only have direct economic and environmental benefits in rural Minnesota, but also will spur 21st century development in the metro area,” according to Jack Keers, the Pipestone County Commissioner who chairs the Rural Minnesota Energy Board.

The Metropolitan Counties Energy Task Force (MCETF) was organized in 1999 in response to deregulation that was sweeping the energy sector to ensure availability, reliability and affordability of electricity and natural gas supplies in Minnesota. As the pace of restructuring slowed, MCETF has provided educational forums for county commissioners on supply, policy and regulatory issues. MCETF is currently engaged in projects to improve energy conservation and identify sources of renewable energy for metropolitan counties.

The Rural Minnesota Energy Board (RMEB) is a Joint Power Board of 15 counties in southern Minnesota formed to provide policy guidance on issues surrounding energy development in rural Minnesota.

Member counties of the Rural Minnesota Energy Board are Blue Earth, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Mower, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock and Watonwan. Counties represented on the Metropolitan Counties Energy Task Force are Anoka, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Sherburne and Washington.