



MEI News

Inside the Minnesota Environmental Initiative

December 2001

2001 IN REVIEW



Opportunity Abounds, Obstacles Confound

For MEI, 2001 was a year of both exciting opportunity and difficult challenge. As the organization entered its second decade, demand for MEI's unique service to the community was greater than ever, as stakeholders approached us to build partnerships on several issues. At the same time, the recession forced MEI to work with increasingly constrained resources.

As the year winds to a close, I am pleased to report success on many fronts. First and foremost, it is important to note that MEI's members made such progress and achievement possible with their generous contributions of time, funding, intellectual capital and commitment. Time and time again, I have been impressed by how members have stepped up to help MEI and our projects succeed, despite the pressure on their own organizations from the slowing economy.

As a result of this remarkable support, 2001 was a year full of what I like to call "MEI moments." Not only were we able to produce more forums than in recent years, but each event attracted the leaders who will be making critical decisions on the issues and exposed them to truly innovative solutions. At the same time, an unprecedented number of MEI's projects directly resulted in tangible outcomes for the environment, including a wind turbine and affordable housing. Underlying all of this, MEI was able to strengthen its financial base despite the tough economy.

Please take a moment to review our list of accomplishments from 2001. As an MEI member, you share the credit for these successes. With your continued commitment in 2002, MEI will produce even more significant outcomes for our environment.

MEI'S OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2001

- > MEI drew more than 700 attendees to 11 events that addressed crucial environmental issues such as climate change, state energy policy, federal energy policy, environmental management trends and ground-level ozone pollution.
- > MEI helped Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity address the environmental issues on several properties so that construction could move ahead on homes for four families. MEI is proud to have helped make sites available for much-needed affordable housing. Playing a similar role, MEI helped nine nonprofits revitalize urban properties in the Twin Cities including the construc-

tion of a school for autistic children. These nonprofits have depended on MEI to provide financial and technical resources that do not exist elsewhere. In several cases the project would have stopped if not for MEI.

> As part of MEI's Energy City demonstration project, the first utility-scale wind turbine in the Twin Cities was completed on 169 north of Elk River. The 200-foot turbine is a prime demonstration of the opportunity for renewable energy in Minnesota.

> Several companies are pursuing voluntary programs to reduce ground-level ozone levels in the Twin Cities directly following MEI's October conference, which brought to light the growing problem in our region. Since a regulatory solution seems difficult to engineer, voluntary action by business provides the best opportunity to improve Twin Cities' air quality.

> MEI's Energy Alley program provided small energy businesses with the tools and information they needed to effectively engage in the debate on energy policy, directly resulting in specific state legislation to build the market for energy efficient and renewable energy products and services.

- Mike Harley, executive director



2002 Environmental Initiative Awards

Got Winners??

It's time for nominations for MEI's ninth annual Environmental Initiative Awards. Each year, MEI recognizes five outstanding examples of innovative partnerships that improve Minnesota's environment. The projects that rise to the top involve public/private partnerships that show an organization reaching beyond its normal scope of work. Of course, nothing shines more than a demonstration of added value to Minnesota's economy and environment. The nominations categories include land use, environmental policy, energy generation and use, environmental management and education (and yes, you can nominate your own organization). Last year MEI received the largest number of nominations ever (more than 65), and this year's pool of candidates should be just as large. Nominations were emailed out in early December; hard copies are also available. Nomination forms also can be downloaded from MEI's web site: <http://www.mn-ei.org/awards.html>. Questions or comments about the awards may be directed to Julie Ball at 612/334-3388, ext. 104, or jball@mn-ei.org.



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More Policy in Energy Alley's Plans for 2002

In 2002, Energy Alley will take advantage of continued support from the Energy Foundation to expand its policy work in two directions. First, Energy Alley will help businesspeople connect into the process of policy development and implementation through public hearings, fact finding and facilitating the development of key officials' understanding of the critical role the energy efficiency and renewable energy sector can play in securing Minnesota's energy future. Second, Energy Alley will develop opportunities for businesspeople to connect with policymakers without having to deal with the barriers posed by the official legislative process. Energy Alley will use its knowledge of the specific difficulties faced by the small and mid-sized businesses that comprise the bulk of the sector to create new venues for participation. Specific activities will be announced as they develop; first up is a policy training session that will be held in late January. For more information, contact Erik Pratt at 612/334-3388, ext. 102, or epratt@mn-ei.org.

They were challenged to think about their strategic placement in the marketplace and were given the latest news on financing, especially the market December 2001 for venture capital funding. Four companies made their pitch for investment funding and were given insightful critiques by the speakers to make their presentations more effective. Keep an eye out for more Energy Alley functions targeted at business development for the energy efficiency and renewable energy companies in Minnesota.



A Month of Members

MEI thanks the following individuals and companies for their October membership contributions. New and upgraded members are denoted with italics. For information on membership, contact Celeste Raker at 612/334-3388, ext. 101 or craker@mn-ei.org.

- American Wind Energy Association
- Rick Andersen
- Joe Appelfhof
- National Audubon Society – Minnesota Chapter
- BossAire Inc.*
- Briggs & Morgan
- City of Minneapolis*
- Earth Tech Inc.*
- Energy Performance Systems Inc.
- Fibrowatt LLC*
- Dale Forsberg
- Genmar Holdings Inc.*
- Bill Hannon
- Herzog/Wheeler & Associates
- Ralph Jacobson*
- Erik Lindberg
- Bill Mahlum
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board*
- Minnesota Department of Administration
- Minnesota Department of Health
- Olmsted County Public Works Department*
- SKB Environmental
- Sandra Smith
- Standby Systems Inc.*
- Technology North
- Tiller Corporation
- West Group



The Color of Success

Green Chip 2001, Energy Alley's second annual business-development conference, met with tremendous success! Representatives from more than 30 energy businesses attended.

Above and Beyond the Session


Environmental leaders in the Minnesota Legislature address critical emerging issues

8:00 am - 11:30 am

Friday, December 14, 2001

Argon Room – Science Museum of Minnesota

See www.mn-ei.org/policy.html or call Adam Sokolski at 612/334-3388, ext. 108 for more information.



Environmental Policy