



MEI News

Inside the Minnesota Environmental Initiative

September 2001



Brownfields Pilot Produces First Habitat Homes

MEI's partnership with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity and the Met Council produced its most satisfying results to date: In late June MEI participated in the dedication of the first two homes built on property assessed under the auspices of the EPA-funded pilot. The assessment removed questions about the environmental condition of the properties, clearing the way for Habitat to proceed with home construction. The homes, at 378 and 384 Nebraska Avenue in St. Paul, were built by all-female crews under Habitat's WomenBuilt project. Andersen Corporation was a major contributor to the effort on Nebraska Avenue and also participated in the dedication. One more house is under construction on the assessed property; a total of eight will be constructed on Nebraska, making for a very efficient Habitat construction.

Another Habitat home is under construction on Stevens Avenue South in Minneapolis on another property assessed by Braun Intertec, the designated environmental services provider for the Met Council-Twin Cities Habitat-MEI pilot. That home should be completed this fall.

The pilot partners have completed assessments of five other properties around the Twin Cities, none of which has presented serious environmental problems. More new housing is expected on at least a couple of the properties, but ownership, soil conditions and infrastructure issues have to be surmounted now that the environmental questions have been answered. Contact Michael Welch at 612/334-3388, ext. 107, for more information.



Green Chip Links Industry With Investors

Where are you putting your money? Dot.coms? Communications? Medical technology? How about energy technology? Energy efficiency and renewable energy are the future. Energy Alley is helping the future become the present by connecting investors with businesspeople who have technologies and dreams of a thriving energy efficiency and renewable energy market. Energy Alley's second Green Chip conference will provide industry information to investors while supplying energy efficiency and renewable energy companies with advice and instruction on successful approaches to investment money. The 2001 conference will be held Friday, November 16. Contact Erik Pratt at 612/334-3388, ext. 102, for more information.

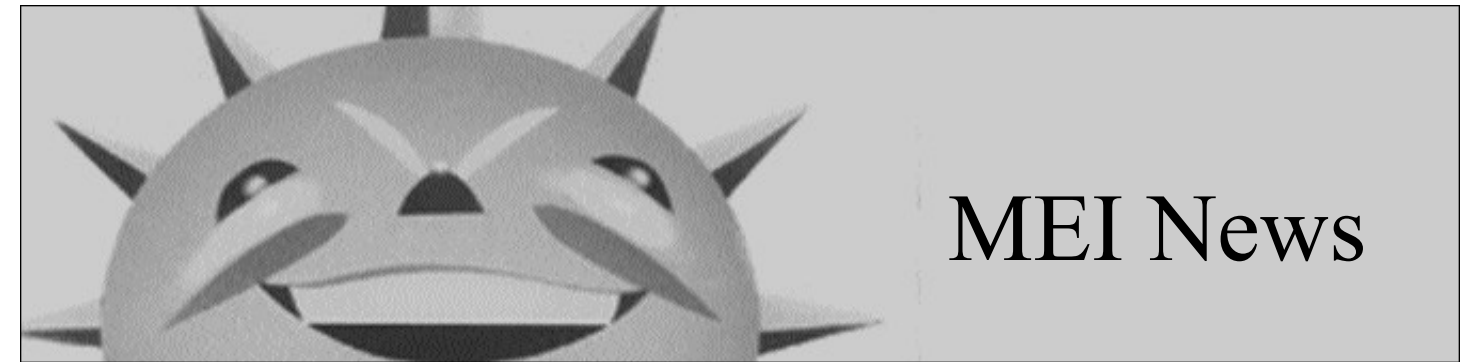


Climate Change Permeates Policy Plans

During the past year, MEI's Environmental Policy program has been focusing more and more energy on programming that addresses climate change. Discussion of global climate change has grown more serious as the issue has been drawn to center stage by the Bush Administration's unwillingness to commit to the Kyoto Protocol, by increasing volatility in the U.S. electrical market and by international pressure on U.S. companies to reduce emissions in other countries.

MEI has the opportunity to leverage its unique position to engage businesses interested in reducing climate change emissions by providing positive examples of working innovative solutions. MEI is working to fund programming to do just that. Climate change will be a stronger presence in the 2002 Policy Forum series. MEI staff members are working to bring the perspective of multinational businesses active in Minnesota to discuss the challenges they face operating in foreign markets. This is an issue that isn't going away anytime soon. Contact Adam Sokolski at 612/334-3388, ext. 108, for more information.

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Helping Entrepreneurs Succeed

For the second year in a row, Energy Alley, with the support of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, is providing scholarships for energy efficiency and renewable energy companies to attend the award-winning FastTrac program at the University of St. Thomas. The program is designed to equip entrepreneurs with practical training in identifying business opportunities, researching the markets and developing business plans. For more information, contact Erik Pratt at 612/334-3388, ext. 102.



Environmental Management Summit

The next generation of MEI's Environmental Management Excellence executive roundtables is the Environmental Management Summit, scheduled for October 24. The summit will focus on current issues and challenges within the context of today's changing environmental landscape. Attendance will be free, but only top-level environmental managers who are MEI members are eligible to participate.

Special thanks to Target Corporation for hosting the summit. Contact Mike Harley at 612/334-3388, ext. 110, to learn more about the program.



Who Is the EERE Industry?

With funding from the state Department of Commerce, Energy Alley is surveying the energy efficiency and renewable energy industry to better understand its impacts on Minnesota's economy and environment. The research will improve existing data on the size of the industry, jobs, products and projected growth. The results will help policymakers and advocates more effectively design their work so that the energy efficiency and renewable

energy industry can further thrive in Minnesota. For a copy of the survey's final results, call Erik Pratt at 612/334-3388, ext. 102.



R4R in Chicago

MEI's Resources for Redevelopment (R4R) program and its collaboration with the Metropolitan Council and Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, and other nonprofits, will featured in at Brownfields 2001, the EPA's annual national brownfields redevelopment conference. Michael Welch, manager of the R4R program, will be joined by Stephen Seidel, executive director of Twin Cities Habitat, to make a presentation Monday, September 24, at 12:45 p.m. titled Society Cannot Survive on Jobs and Tax-Base Alone – the Unique Opportunity of Nonprofit Brownfields Redevelopment. Several other Minnesota organizations also will make presentations at the conference. MEI is endorsing Brownfields 2001, which takes place at McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago, September 24-26. The conference brings together professionals from government, business, community groups and nonprofit organizations to share thoughts about the most effective and appropriate ways to put blighted properties back to productive use. Contact Michael Welch at 612/334-3388, ext. 107, for more information.



Companies at the Capitol

Public policy is shaped by those who participate in the process: legislators, citizens, lobbyists and now energy efficiency and renewable energy businesspeople. Energy Alley's Companies at the Capitol initiative continues to help industry professionals plug into the policy process by providing them with information and tools for communication that allow them to make sure their voices are heard on the Hill.

