



MEI News

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Inside the Minnesota Environmental Initiative



Energy Alley Realigns

In January, the Energy Alley board of directors unanimously approved an exciting new vision and mission for the program. The new vision is "to position Minnesota as a leading center for clean, efficient energy technology, enhancing our state's environment and economy." The new mission of Energy Alley is "to be a public-private partnership to promote clean and efficient energy technology in Minnesota – from research to successful application and commercialization."

The changes position Energy Alley in line with organizations around the country that are using energy-efficient and renewable-energy technology as a point of connecting local economic development to environmental improvement. The change focuses Energy Alley's work on technology and broadens the group of potential participants to include not only the energy efficiency and renewable energy industry, but also other public and private stakeholders who believe that Minnesota should be a leader in the clean and efficient energy technology market.

States around the country – from New England to Ohio to Washington – are organizing initiatives to develop clean energy technology sectors. Some of these are multi-million dollar initiatives focused on research. While much smaller, Energy Alley will rely on its capacity to promote partnerships, research, commercialization and public policy.

The board also endorsed a new model for operations at Energy Alley. Energy Alley will employ workgroups that address specific barriers to energy-technology development in Minnesota. For example, the first workgroup formed will address issues related to successful and innovative implementation of utility conservation programs around the state. Another workgroup might be formed to engage the financial community in Minnesota's energy technology businesses and projects.

Energy Alley will not focus exclusively on research. But research and development will become an important part of Energy Alley's work, because of its importance in building technology sectors.

One of the important ideas that Energy Alley has emphasized – and will continue to emphasize – is that savvy business techniques, particularly in marketing and sales, are key components to building strong business sectors in energy technology. Energy Alley will not be shifting away from commercialization, but will build linkages among researchers, small and large technology

companies, utilities, contractors and the financial community to further commercialization and our understanding of the energy marketplace.

The new vision and mission also explicitly designate Minnesota as the center of Energy Alley's interests. Minnesota has strong and talented business and technology communities, and Energy Alley is dedicated to helping this talent compete in the growing international markets that we believe in.

For more information about the changes at Energy Alley, contact me at epratt@mn-ei.org or 612/334-3388, ext. 102.

– Erik Pratt

Droessler Takes the Reins on Clean Air Minnesota

Bill Droessler has taken over as director of MEI's new Clean Air Minnesota program, which is organizing and facilitating a variety of specific projects designed to reduce ground-level ozone in the Twin Cities. MEINews asked Droessler to introduce himself to MEI's members and program participants, which he does in the column below:

My name is Bill Droessler and I am the new program director for Clean Air Minnesota. Much like the groups involved in Clean Air Minnesota, my background is diverse. I have done environmental work for an international insurance company and for the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group. For the last three years, I worked on land use issues for 1000 Friends of Minnesota. I graduated from Beloit College and the Energy and Environmental Law Program of the Chicago Kent College of Law, Illinois Institute of Technology.

In my first weeks on the job, it's become clear that a strong foundation has been established for Clean Air Minnesota. MEI now has staff focused exclusively on the program and its important agenda. Each of the CAM project teams is developing potential programs and pursuing funding options. We are making new contacts and recruiting groups and organizations that can help us meet the program's goals.

This is an exciting time to be dealing with these issues. In Chicago, a trading program is being created for greenhouse gas emissions. St. Louis has been reclassified to "serious non-attainment" for the one-hour ozone standard. California officials recently declared that they had "vastly underestimated smog-forming emissions from a vari-

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ety of sources" and that they may not be able to avoid penalties under the Clean Air Act. Clean Air Minnesota gives our region a unique opportunity to ensure that we never face such problems.

If you have any questions about Clean Air Minnesota, please contact me at bdroessler@mn-ei.org or 612/334-3388, ext. 103.

– **Bill Droessler**

John Neville
Lee Paddock
Peder Larson Consulting, LLC
Rick Person
Richardson, Richter & Associates
Star Tribune
J.L. Strand
Technology North
Jason Trask
URS Corporation
Steven Voss
Jean Welch
Michael Welch
Jamie Worm

Thanks, Members

Thanks to the folks and organizations listed below for their recent membership contributions to MEI. New and upgraded members are listed in italics. For information on membership, contact Tracy Nordquist at 612/334-3388, ext. 101, or tnordquist@mn-ei.org.

American Lung Association of Minnesota
Joe Appelfhof
Audubon Minnesota
Braun Intertec
Cardinal Glass Industries
Jon A. Carlson
Kim E. Carlson
Kelly Collins
Brian H. Davis
David Downs
Michael Egelston
Sara Ethier
EnXco
Faegre & Benson
Ford Motor Company - St. Paul Plant
Chuck Gadelmann
Bill Heaney
John Heer
Hunt Utilities Group
Heather Isle
Ralph Jacobson
Eldon G. Kaul
Todd King
Land O'Lakes Inc.
Kevin J. Lawless
Legend Technical Services
Erik Lindberg
Leonard, Street & Deinard
Paula Maccabee
Jim Mallman
Metropolitan Council Environmental Services
Brent Morningstar
Sarah Nettleton

R4R Meets the Neighbors

Thanks to the McKnight Foundation's first-ever brownfields grant and support from Hennepin County's Environmental Response Fund, MEI's Resources for Redevelopment program (R4R) has begun turning redevelopment projects upside-down.

Most of the time, brownfields redevelopments occur because a developer or an organization runs across a property it wants to purchase for its own use; the brownfields assessment (and remediation, if necessary) take place in order to facilitate the transaction, and neighborhood involvement consists of selling the particular redevelopment plan to folks who live and/or work



in the surrounding area. Under the just-launched Common Spaces project, R4R will flip the process by

going to neighborhood organizations first and asking them what problem properties they have and what redevelopment scenarios they are interested in. If environmental issues are inhibiting reuse, R4R will go to work on clearing up the questions. From there, R4R will connect the neighborhood groups to other sources of support and expertise to move the project forward.

McKnight is underwriting R4R's project management and outreach to communities, while Hennepin County funding will be used to pay for environmental assessment hard costs. The project will get under way in February with an informational session for interested neighborhood groups, to be offered in cooperation with Minneapolis' Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

To learn more or to discuss a potential Common Spaces project, contact me at 612/334-3388, ext. 107, or mwelch@mn-ei.org.

– **Michael Welch**