

Xcel Energy's City and County Alliances Guide Energy Savings

Across the United States, cities and communities are looking for ways to take their energy planning to the next level. In Minnesota and Colorado, Xcel Energy is helping its customers to achieve their goals through its Partners in Energy offering.

It starts with an action plan.



For example:

- Sign up 750 home owners for a Home Energy Squad visit to identify energy savings opportunities like high-efficiency lighting.
- Reduce or offset 2 percent of business electricity usage annually.
- Lower the city's electricity usage by 7.5 percent within 18 months.

Xcel Energy facilitates the program in collaboration with cities, counties, and other community conveners. Partners in Energy helps communities work with local residents and businesses to identify their future energy goals, develop a strategic plan, and implement strategies to achieve them.

Through a two-year collaboration, Xcel Energy works with communities to help develop and implement a community-based energy action plan. As part of the program, Xcel Energy will:

- Develop and facilitate a plan that reflects a community's unique needs, resources, and opportunities;
- Analyze data regarding program participation and energy use to enable informed planning and decision-making;
- Provide support through project management, marketing communications, and tracking; and
- Recognize and celebrate achievement of goals.

CITY OF RED WING ENERGY ACTION PLAN	
 Red Wing residents took 1,054 ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACTIONS between 2015 and 2017.	 Businesses took 258 ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACTIONS between 2015 and 2017.
<hr/> 247 HOUSEHOLDS subscribed to Windsource* by the end of 2017.	<hr/> 31 HOUSEHOLDS engaged through door-to-door outreach efforts.
<p><small>*Windsource is a voluntary program that allows residential and business customers to purchase and retire renewable energy credits (RECs) from Xcel Energy. A REC is a tradeable instrument that can be used to meet voluntary renewable energy targets, as well as to meet compliance requirements for renewable energy policies.</small></p>	

Whether aiming to add renewable energy, reduce electric and natural gas consumption, or lower carbon dioxide emissions, a robust action plan outlines actionable strategies that may include promotional

outreach, education, events, and public relations. Community engagement is a key component. "We help communities form a team, make a plan that reflects their priorities, and implement



change. We also track and report progress, which often is a great motivator to continue efforts and encourage even more people to get involved,” says Tami Gunderzik, Partners in Energy manager.

The effort is not only working, but winning awards.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce recently honored three Minnesota cities—Edina, Red Wing, and Winona—as winners of the 2018 Minnesota Clean Energy Community Awards. The awards recognize a community’s overall effort from the previous year to help the state achieve its clean energy goals. These three communities created energy action plans through Partners in Energy and received accolades at the Clean Energy Resource Teams Conference.

One City’s Story

The city of Red Wing is a long-time energy efficiency and renewable energy proponent and has used a number of Xcel Energy’s

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programs to achieve more than \$100,000 in rebates. In 2017, the city completed its initial work to implement its energy action

plan with Xcel Energy’s support. The Minnesota Clean Energy Community Award recognized the work done to date, including a congregation energy challenge to engage residents, and door-to-door outreach and follow-up from volunteer business energy coaches. In 2018, Red Wing again was accepted into Partners in Energy to build on these achievements and to continue driving energy savings in the community.

Colorado Connection

Xcel Energy’s second largest territory is in Colorado. That’s where the company is working with High Country Conservation Center (HC3) to define and execute strategies for local cities and Summit County to reduce energy consumption and to introduce more renewable energy. Partners in Energy efforts have been underway since summer 2015 through an initiative called Energize Summit County.

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One of the most significant outcomes of these efforts in Summit County, where ski area operations make up approximately 5 to 7 percent of total energy consumption, is a collaborative ski area working group. HC3, Partners in Energy, all of the local ski areas, and two ski areas outside the county share best practices and energy savings solutions. This group includes Arapahoe Basin, Copper Mountain and Eldora, Vail Resort’s Keystone and Breckenridge, and Loveland Basin. Although they compete for skiers, these resorts recognize the impact of their energy footprint and the importance of greater efficiency and renewable energy for their industry and the community.

Through Partners in Energy, these resorts have shared best practices around energy efficiency and promoted sustainable technologies, including high-efficiency snow guns, building controls, variable frequency drives on snowmaking compressors, LED lighting retrofits, and refrigeration upgrades. Several resorts also have engaged

their employees with free LED light bulbs and education around energy use and reduction goals.

Their commitments to sustainability go beyond energy efficiency. Some resorts have installed solar arrays, upgraded to low-flush toilets to save water, increased composting, and increased recycling on their properties.

The group meets regularly, has set individual and combined ski area goals, supports coordinated implementation of a range of projects to meet those goals, and demonstrates influence and leadership. Their combined efforts are paying off.

“Many people don’t realize that we’re actually here to help them determine ways to save energy and money,” says Sharon Panas, Xcel Energy account manager. “We have a variety of tools, resources, and rebates to help organizations get started.”

Working Toward the Greater Good

Partners in Energy’s goals fit concisely into Xcel Energy’s overall company goals. Partners in Energy aims to develop a better understanding of the needs of the communities, better align its services and programs with what customers need, and support Xcel Energy’s philosophy of community engagement.

And, by helping communities achieve their own energy goals, Xcel Energy can keep its promises to lead the clean energy transition, keep customer bills low, and enhance the customer experience.

As the word spreads, the list of communities is growing. To date, Partners in Energy has worked with 18 entities in Minnesota and 15 in Colorado. The outreach—and the savings—will continue for years to come. **EP**

HIGH COUNTRY CONSERVATION CENTER ACTION PLAN

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

↓ 7%

from 2014.

The ski areas have documented approximately

4

GIGAWATT-HOURS of demand-side management savings and have

1.75

GIGAWATT-HOURS of savings in the pipeline from ski area projects.

Residents have installed

126

KILOWATTS of solar energy, with another 600 kilowatts slated for installation in summer 2018.