

ENERGYMATTERS



At this moment in time, electrifying more of the economy with wind and solar might be the best thing we can do for our future.

Building of the CapX2020 transmission line. / Photo by Xcel Energy

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIPS

BY MICHAEL NOBLE

BUILDING A MORE ELECTRIC ECONOMY

When Fresh Energy was founded in 1992, one of our key goals was to use less electricity. Now, with more wind and solar in our system, it has become clear that there are big benefits to moving more of our economy into the electric sector. We can use less fossil fuels while growing the business of our local utilities.

If we build highly efficient homes and buildings, electricity can be used for space and water heating. If we create effective electric vehicle charging programs, we can shift a significant portion of our transportation system over to local electricity. As demand for energy increases, we can work with utilities and businesses to ensure new energy production comes from renewable sources like wind and solar.

PARTNERING WITH BUSINESSES AND UTILITIES

In order for all of that new wind and solar to be utilized most effectively, we need to improve our grid and open up energy markets. Minnesota and the upper Midwest are already well on their way, thanks to massive

investments in interstate transmission like CapX2020, a joint initiative by 11 utilities in Minnesota, the Dakotas, and Wisconsin.

In the past, energy advocates have pushed back on transmission projects because they may have been carrying energy from dirty power plants. Now, as the market for wind and solar continues to expand, transmission is needed to bring abundant clean energy to communities across the region. Fresh Energy has partnered with utilities and clean energy business groups like Wind on the Wires to advocate for these new clean energy lines that can open up the market for energy investment while reducing the need for aging power plants.

CLEANER AND CHEAPER

Renewable electricity resources aren't just cleaner, they're also more cost-effective. That's why utilities are already investing in expanding this part of their business. Fresh Energy's role, as it's always been, will be to provide the best research and analysis to make this transition work for everyone.



In 2017 Fresh Energy is celebrating its 25th anniversary. What has changed? Coal accounts for less of our energy, down from 64 percent in 1992 to 43 percent. Wind and solar have expanded from nothing in 1992 to nearly 20 percent today. Minnesota's energy efficiency efforts have saved enough energy to avoid the generation of more than eight large coal-fired power plants. Opportunities we did not imagine—including electric vehicles and smart electric grids—are now coming on fast.

Fresh Energy is proud to have helped power this change, working with partners and policy makers and governors of three political parties. Fresh Energy has repeatedly brought people together to shape and drive realistic, visionary policies.

Over the coming year, we will be commemorating Fresh Energy's 25th anniversary by profiling energy leaders who got their start at Fresh Energy, and highlighting some of the innovations and forward progress we helped drive. We'll also be talking about all the work we still must do—together—to speed the transition to a clean energy future.

Michael Noble

EMAIL: noble@fresh-energy.org

TWITTER: @nobleideas

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE AND OTHER STORIES
AT FRESH-ENERGY.ORG

COMMUNITY SOLAR TURNS TWO

As the market potential and popularity of community solar grows nationally, all eyes are on Minnesota and Xcel Energy's Solar*Rewards Community program. At the two-year anniversary of Xcel Energy's community solar program launch, Fresh Energy took a deep dive on the health of the program today and its potential going forward. What we found is that the slow-moving interconnection process has accelerated but there is more work to be done to ensure subscriber access for all.

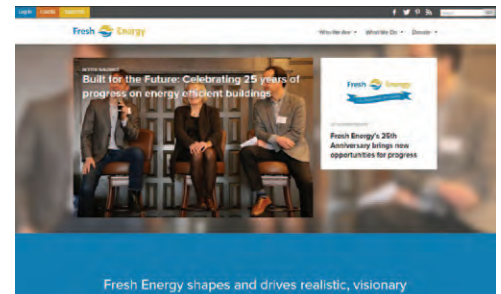
DRIVING ELECTRIC VEHICLES FORWARD

Electric vehicles continue to grow their market share in Minnesota and nationally, and that growth is about to take a big jump in 2017 with new, more affordable models and high quality used electric cars providing very low-cost options. Fresh Energy is partnering with state agencies and local communities to offer in-depth analysis of how new models compare to the cars they currently purchase for their fleets.



CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE

As part of our 25th anniversary, Fresh Energy is rolling out a brand new website that went live this month. The new site features a mobile responsive design and greatly improved usability. Take a look to learn more about our staff experts, new energy analysis, and upcoming Fresh Energy events.



MEET FRESH ENERGY'S NEWEST FELLOWS

Fresh Energy has a long-standing commitment to providing robust Fellowship opportunities. Fellows power Fresh Energy programs—and help emerging leaders gain professional experience in energy policy. Meet three Fellows working with Fresh Energy now: Anna Fineanganfo (top right), a 2017 Capitol Pathways Intern and student at Macalester College, is working with our government relations team. Ben Bratrud (middle right) is an energy policy research fellow supporting Fresh Energy's Energy Performance and Energy Markets departments. Kirsten Triller (bottom right), a student at the University of Northwestern-Saint Paul, is working on a variety of engagement and communications projects, including our popular Power Pairings event series.





MINNESOTA LEADS ON SOLAR FOR POLLINATORS AND CROPS

Solar is blooming in Minnesota—and there's plenty more to come. As ground-mounted solar sites spring up around the state, tens of millions of native flowers and short-growing meadow grasses will be taking root under and around the panels. Look for black-eyed susans to develop faster than the rest, followed by purple prairie clover, partridge pea, butterfly weed, and more.

This abundant habitat for pollinators—the bees and other insects that move pollen between flowering plants—will be equivalent to more than 1.4 million backyard pollinator gardens approximately 6 by 12 feet each. Using less than 0.1 percent of Minnesota's farmland, pollinator-friendly solar will help increase the yields of crops like tomatoes, melons, and squash, grown in adjacent fields.

Learning from projects in the United Kingdom, Minnesota is a national leader on solar development that is co-located with, and provides benefits to, agriculture. In 2016 Fresh Energy and Audubon Minnesota worked together with agricultural and business leaders to establish the nation's first statewide standard for vegetation on solar sites. The U.S. Department of Energy recently highlighted Fresh Energy's work during a well-attended national webinar "Co-location of Solar and Agriculture," available in the Renewable Electricity section of Fresh Energy's website. Pollinator-friendly solar projects are now being proposed and built in Wisconsin, Iowa, Maryland, and Vermont.

Find out how your area can have more pollinator-friendly solar by inviting Fresh Energy to present to your church, civic, or business group. Contact Rob Davis, davis@fresh-energy.org or 651 726 7565.

Join the Dunlop family in making a Power Circle donation by visiting our website or contacting individual giving director Meggie LaValley at: lavalley@fresh-energy.org.



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF WORKING TOGETHER AND GIVING BACK

John Dunlop first learned about climate change when he was in engineering school in the 1970s. Recognizing this global threat, he set out on a career path to work toward mitigating and reducing the effects of a changing climate. Luckily for Fresh Energy, John and his wife Susan met Michael Noble shortly before Fresh Energy was formed. When asked to serve on the first Fresh Energy Board of Directors in 1992, John agreed. Fast forward to 2017, John and Susan are still passionately committed to Fresh Energy's mission and generous Power Circle donors.

John and Susan recognize both the value of Fresh Energy and the important role we all have to play in our transition to a clean energy economy. "Our society functions best when we accomplish tasks together, and we all play an essential role in participating and engaging in public policy discourse and decisions," John said. "Fresh Energy is one of the most committed organizations in the state that is able to effectively tailor state policies to address climate and quality of life issues. We all need to support organizations like Fresh Energy so they can continue this work that is so important to all Minnesotans and the future of our grandchildren and their grandchildren."



408 Saint Peter Street, Suite 220
Saint Paul, MN 55102

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FEATURE EVENT | POWER PAIRINGS

POSITIVELY ELECTRIC:

EMBRACING CLEAN ELECTRICITY
TO POWER MORE OF OUR
ECONOMY



YOU'RE INVITED!

Join Fresh Energy and two
experts for a conversation
about Stanford University's
shift from fossil fuels to clean
electricity to power its entire
Palo Alto campus—and
electrifying progress and
possibilities here in Minnesota.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2017

7:00 - 8:30 AM

TOWN AND COUNTRY CLUB

300 N Mississippi River Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55104

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Joseph Stagner, executive
director of sustainability
and energy management at
Stanford University.



Will Kaul, vice president and
chief transmission officer at
Great River Energy.

Photo by Brian Christ