

Minutes of the Montana Renewable Energy Association
Quarterly Meeting, February 8, 2006
Bozeman

Present:

Dave Ryan, NCAT & WindPark Solutions America -- President & Board Member
Chris Borton, Sage Mountain Center -- Vice President & Board Member
Georgia Brensdal, DEQ -- Board Member & carrying Pat Judge proxy -- Sec. &
Board M.
Mikey Strickland, Dearborn Solar -- Board Member
Paul Farley, Energy Outfitters
Barton Churchill, Independent Power Systems
Steve Edwards, Independent Power Systems
Conor Darby, Independent Power Systems
Tony Boniface, Independent Power Systems
Lu Marie Strickland, Dearborn Solar
Steven Aagenes, In-Solar
Kathi Montgomery, DEQ
Charles Day, Individual Member

Open Forum with Dealers Present: Big issue for solar installations is the shortage of PV panels. This is a global market for distribution. Some Montana dealers/installers have success with getting smaller orders going directly to manufacturers. Some Montana dealers are expanding into Colorado where more incentives are driving the demand for systems.

Safety issues, even at residential installations, are becoming critical for dealers. The need for professional installers with experience and training is becoming more important as the voltages of panels are greater. Many states are requiring warranty and certification of installers for rebates to be awarded.

Small wind systems issues: Costs are high for the amount of power produced. They are almost as expensive in \$/average KW as PV. Then there are more moving parts, and a tower to complicate the system. Discussion on the performance of small systems with inter-tie capabilities. It has shown mixed results in the Montana high wind areas. Wind systems as part of a hybrid system for off-grid applications have worked well. Robb Creek demonstration works well.

USBC Report: Chris Borton delivered report from John Campbell. Funding for education in renewable energy was reduced from \$100,000 to \$50,000. Rebate funds for wind and solar, projected to be \$500,000 to \$650,000 for 2006. Some funding is still available. These are the funds collected in 2005. There may be more 2006 funds available, but unknown at this time. These funds cannot be carried over for more than one year, 60% of the projects will go to public owned projects. Diversified mix of

technologies that broaden perspective of renewables in Montana will be selected for funding. No R&D projects will be funded.

Conservation rebates are now part of the DSM program. Conservation goals are 5 MW first year, and then 10 MW. Allowed conservation projects cannot have more than one year payback to the consumer after the incentive, the incentive cannot makeup more than 50% of the project costs, and the amount of the incentive must meet the resource value calculation.

John Campbell requested input on the Program's and the Companies concern about monitoring the reliability and quality of grid inter-ties. Are system installer certification programs a benefit to customer satisfaction and reliability?

Other Reports: Dave Ryan and Georgia Brensdal presented information on the ETIC subcommittee public forum and meeting on SJR 36, Study of Distributed Generation. Dave Ryan said he could draft some up some proposals on net-metering for the members to review. Steve said he could testify at a meeting.

Kathi provided information on the upcoming Harvesting Clean Energy Conference in Spokane and the Geothermal Working Group meeting on March 22 at NCAT in Butte.

New Business: Tony Boniface was nominated and approved unanimously for the vacant Board of Director slot.

Discussion to look into license plate fund raiser and promotion activity. Dave will bring information to next meeting.

Update MREA education materials was item for next time. Possibility of hiring someone to do this with funds in the treasury.

Sustainability Fair Update from Chris Borton based on letter from Northern Rockies was discussed. Water is subject for this year. Solar water heater demonstration was a suggestion for MREA participation. Solar powered pumping system was another example. Next meeting location was proposed in Helena, possibly the StrawHouse Market.

Meeting adjourned.

These Minutes were prepared by Georgia Brensdal, with assistance from Patrick Judge, Secretary.

ADDENDUM -- The minutes of the October 12, 2005 meeting were subsequently approved by consensus.