



Solar Meals for Seniors Demonstration Project

Senior citizens meal programs provide a necessary service for our older neighbors. That's why NorthWestern Energy and the National Center for Appropriate Technology are looking to provide some of these programs with help from the sun.

NorthWestern Energy is seeking facilities that prepare and/or serve meals to seniors to participate in the new 2004 Solar Meals for Seniors Demonstration Project. The project will install solar electric systems on eight to 10 facilities free of charge. Ranging in size from one to two kilowatts, the systems will provide a portion of each building's electricity needs, thus saving money for the facility. Any excess electricity produced by the system will be fed into the utility grid through a net-metering agreement with NorthWestern Energy.

In addition to saving money for participating facilities, solar electric systems are reliable, require very little maintenance, and generate "green" electricity, which is less harmful to the environment than fossil fuels.

Additionally, each facility will participate in an energy audit conducted by NCAT personnel that will identify measures or operating procedures that can further reduce energy costs. The audit will include a report that estimates potential energy and cost savings, as well as projected costs. The energy audit and report are also provided free of charge to participants.

Each solar installation for this project will be included in the federal Million Solar Roofs Initiative. Announced in 1997 by the Clinton Administration, this federal effort commits to installing solar energy systems on a million buildings by the year 2010. Montana has committed to installing 1,000 systems by 2010; each 2kW system will count as two systems. As of April 2004, there have been over 400 systems installed in Montana.

This project is funded through NorthWestern Energy Universal Systems Benefit (USB) funds, created by Montana's 1997 utility restructuring legislation. USB provides money to new and existing energy conservation activities, low-income energy assistance, and renewable resource projects and applications. The project is being managed by The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization headquartered in Butte, Montana.

Facilities must be served by the NorthWestern Energy electric distribution system to qualify. For more information, contact:

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The application also is available online at www.montanagreenpower.com