

Minnesota Energy: The Future is Renewable presentation

The University of Minnesota Alumni Association, West Central Lake Chapter, and the West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership will present "Minnesota Energy: The Future is Renewable," a presentation by Dr. Lanny Schmidt. Schmidt is one of the nation's leading experts in renewable energy. He is a professor of chemical engineering and a collaborative member of the U's Initiative for Renewable Energy and the Environment. Energy costs are on the rise. Find out what the University of Minnesota is doing to develop alternative, renewable energy sources and its implications for Minnesota consumers. The free event will take place Thursday, March 27 at Nelson Gables in the Governor's Room, beginning with a 5:30 p.m. social followed by the presentation at 6 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar will be available. Reserve your seat by contacting Nan Haggerty at (320) 239-2544 or e-mail nhaggerty@hcinet.net.

Permit for wind turbine project gets the OK from commission

The Willmar Planning Commission on Wednesday night approved a conditional use permit for the Willmar Municipal Utilities to erect two wind turbines on Willmar School District property north of the Senior High School. Information on the turbine project was presented by Wes Hompe, utilities' staff electrical engineer. The commission's action will be forwarded to the City Council on Monday night in the minutes of the commission's meeting. The Willmar School Board approved a lease in January to allow the utilities to erect the turbines. The Internal Revenue Service has approved \$5 million in interest-free financing under the Clean Renewable Energy Bond program for half of the estimated \$9.5 million to \$10 million cost of the two turbines. Also, utilities officials hope to erect two turbines on land near Ridgewater College. Utilities officials have said the turbines will help Willmar comply with state renewable energy requirements. By 2025, all utilities – except for a few municipals – will be required to have at least 25 percent of energy needs met by renewable sources. Wind studies indicate the four turbines could generate up to 10 megawatts of power, providing up to approximately 9 percent of Willmar's electrical needs (by David Little, West Central Tribune).

Lac qui Parle County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan

On March 31st (Monday) is a public input hearing for the Lac qui Parle County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan 2003 – 2013. It will be held in the Madison City Hall Auditorium at 10:30 a.m. in Madison. This is a five year update mandated by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the purpose of the amendment is to revise Chapter 4 which includes goals, objectives and action steps for 2008 – 2013. Copies of the revised goals, objectives and action steps for 2008 – 2013 may be obtained at the Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District offices at 122 8th Avenue S., Suite 1, Madison, MN 56256 (telephone 320-598-7321 Ext. 3). All persons interested may appear and be heard at said time and place.

St. Paul / City tries energy-efficient bulbs

Four new streetlights in St. Paul's Como Park neighborhood could shine a beacon into the future of the city. City workers on Thursday installed four prototype streetlight lamps that use light-emitting diodes, or LEDs, which last longer than other lights and are touted as more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly than any other form of artificial lighting. The city is thinking about eventually swapping out all 37,000 high-pressure sodium streetlights, which now cost \$1.3 million a year in electricity, according to the Public Works Department. But before the city moves ahead, it wants people to tell the city what they think about the new lights, which will likely appear to be dimmer. The prototype lights, made by Minneapolis-based Taossunto Lighting, are located on Iowa Avenue between Chatsworth and Milton streets. They look the same except when they light up, said traffic engineer Paul St. Martin, who's heading up the pilot LED program. Anyone with feedback can e-mail PW-LEDlights@ci.stpaul.mn.us or mail Saint Paul Traffic and Lighting c/o LED Streetlights, 800 City Hall Annex, 25 W. Fourth St., St. Paul MN 55102 (by Dave Orrick,

Pioneer Press).

FARMFEST Sustainable Tent

There is a tremendous opportunity to have a tent at FARMFEST this summer focused on Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Entrepreneurs and related issues. Because this requires a significant investment, the planning team is trying to gauge the interest in rural enterprises, organizations and others who might be willing to have a booth at a cost of \$600/10 x 10 feet of booth space. You can sell product in your space. You can have more than one space. There are 42 spaces available. There is a desire to have representation from across the state. FARMFEST dates are August 5,6 &7, 2008 and it is held in rural Redwood Falls on the Gilfillian Estate. Participants would need to be there all three days. Please respond ASAP with your interest in participating whether it be Yes- No- or Maybe. Indications of your interest should be emailed to Kate Bresaw at bresa001@umn.edu. Thank you for your continued support of rural issues. This is a great opportunity to get exposure for your rural enterprise. Attendance at FarmFest is 30,000 plus each year.

Retrofits on School Buses are helping air quality

<http://wcco.com/video/?id=39544@wcco.dayport.com>

Paddles Fish Reports on the Minnesota River

Angler reports of snagged paddlefish on the Minnesota River have been trickling in over the past year particularly in the vicinity of Mankato. Conservation officers working downstream of Mankato this winter have reported seeing paddle fish snagged and released by anglers targeting walleye and sauger. The accompanying photos are paddlefish caught and released in that area, (<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/paddlefish.pdf>). Further upstream near Minnesota Falls at the Kinney Public Access an angler reported releasing a paddlefish three and one half feet in length this past fall. Reports of incidental catches of paddlefish have been increasing in recent years. Although we cannot document these encounters as a direct correlation to water quality improvements, it certainly leaves us with a hint of optimism (Lee Sundmark, MN DNR).

Another fish from the Minnesota River

Here is another interesting fish – Bigmouth Buffalo – caught in the Minnesota River. James Fett of the Water Resources Center and soon to be of the Maple River Clean Water Partnership Project caught this fish three weeks ago near St. Peter, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/bigmouthbuffalo.pdf>. According to James they are good smoked.

Events:

March 29th (Saturday) is the **Far North Symposium** sponsored by the Minnesota Canoe Association from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Metropolitan State University in St. Paul. For more information: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/canoeposter.pdf>

April 5th (Saturday) is **Unlocking the Secrets of the Minnesota River** presentation at 10:15 a.m. at the Linneaus Arboretum, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter. For more information: <http://mrdbc.mnsu.edu/calendar/pdfs/leagueofwomenvoterspresentation.pdf>

April 5th (Saturday) is the **Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River (CCMR) annual MN River Banquet** at the New Ulm Community Center located at the corner of Highway 15 North and German Street. Doors will open at 5 p.m. with a social hour and dinner served at 6:30 p.m. For more information: <http://mrdbc.mnsu.edu/calendar/pdfs/ccmrbanquet.pdf>

April 8th (Tuesday) is the first of three **Conservation Drainage Symposiums** from 7:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. at the Chippewa County Courthouse Assembly Room in Montevideo. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/conservationdrainagesymposiums.pdf>

April 9th (Wednesday) is the second of three **Conservation Drainage Symposiums** from 7:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. at the New Ulm Holiday Inn. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/conservationdrainagesymposiums.pdf>

April 10th (Thursday) is the last of the three **Conservation Drainage Symposiums** from 7:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. at the Bloomington Civic Plaza in the City Council Chambers. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/conservationdrainagesymposiums.pdf>

April 13th (Sunday) is the program **Water Presentation in Natural Settings** from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Holy Spirit Retreat Center, Mankato. For more information: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/holyspiritpresentation.pdf>

April 15th (Tuesday) is the **Minnesota River Watershed Alliance Quarterly Meeting** at the New Century Charter School in Hutchinson. A social hour begins at 6:00 p.m. with food and drink, and the regular meeting at 7:00 p.m.

April 17th (Thursday) is the “**Rain Gardens for Water Quality**” presentation at 7:00 p.m. at the Ney Nature Center outside of Henderson. For more information, <http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/calendar/pdfs/raingardenney.pdf>

Check out additional upcoming events and workshops on the Minnesota River Calendar at: <http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/calendar/index.html>

Water Quality Articles:

Our view: CapX 2020 line should interest all. More public meetings are scheduled on the potential routes for building a 250-mile, high-voltage line between Monticello and Fargo, ND including Clearwater and Melrose, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/capx2020powerline.pdf>

Label for carbon monoxide packaging imminent, Target says. A Target official told a congressional panel that Hormel Foods and Cargill are close to putting a label on meat to let consumers know when it has been treated with a gas to make it look fresher, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/carbonmonoxidepackagingimminent.pdf>

Celebrate Minnesota’s deep agricultural roots. University of Minnesota President Robert Bruininks talks about the importance of agricultural to the state of Minnesota as we celebrate National Agricultural Day on March 20th, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/celebratemndeepagriculturalroots.pdf>

Spread of bovine TB may force DNR to kill elk. The spread of bovine tuberculosis in northwestern Minnesota has forced the Department of Natural Resources to consider killing some wild elk by issuing shooting permits on a case-by-case basis, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/dnrtokill elkbovinetb.pdf>

Higher-blend ethanol challenged for smaller engines. Cars and trucks using a 20 percent ethanol blend may work just fine, according to a recent study. But what about lawnmowers, boats or chainsaws?, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/higherblendethanolsmallerengines.pdf>

Who isn’t claiming potential to be “Saudi Arabia of” renewables? The idea of a state or region having the energy potential of Saudi Arabia is examined by a number of experts in the renewable energy world, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/saudiarabiaofrenewables.pdf>

Biodiesel backers seeks same boost as ethanol. Minnesota already leads the nation in the manufacture and use of ethanol. Now the legislature is considering a big boost for biodiesel by

mandating 20-percent biodiesel blends by 2015,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/biolieselbackersseekboost.pdf>

Attorney says Mower feedlot officer sought MPCA's opinion. According to an attorney, Feedlot officer Lowell Franzen checked with MPCA about him legally getting a feedlot permit and than transferring it, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mowerfeedlotmpcaopinion.pdf>

Advocates say clean energy brings in the green. Columnist Neal St. Anthony writes, "Green" investing couldn't come along at a better time. U.S. dependence on foreign oil is a huge liability for the environment and for the economy,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/advocatescleanenergygreen.pdf>

Amber Waves of Green. According to this article in the Wall Street Journal, no one does a better job at picking taxpayer pockets – not trail lawyers not even AARP – as the farm lobby with farmers about to score the most lavish subsidies in American history,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/amberwavesofgreen.pdf>

Bush urges Congress to finish farm bill by April. President Bush is urging Congress to keep current farm law for another year if lawmakers can't agree by April on a new bill to extend farm and nutrition programs, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/bushurgescongressfinishfarbill.pdf>

Dedicated funding: Council concept making headway. A council to oversee about \$91 million per year in fish and wildlife habitat money took its first step forward last week in the Senate, and was poised for movement in the House,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/dedicatedfundingcouncilconcept.pdf>

Dedicated funding: Nothing comes easily, it seems. According to Dennis Anderson, dedicated funding to help the outdoors world is close to reality, but there isn't agreement on who will oversee the money, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/dedicatedfundingnothingcomeseasy.pdf>

DNR to buy 'incredibly rare' wetland in Carver County. Environmentalists cheer as agency gets go-ahead to purchase 106 acres of Seminary Fen near Chanhassen but not entire 160 acres in MN River Valley, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/dnrbuyincrediblyrarewetlandcarverco.pdf>

Energy conservation: Meter's running. According to the Economist, Consumer electronics: Displays that reveal how much electricity your home is using can give you a nasty – but informative – surprise, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/energyconservationmetersrunning.pdf>

Ethanol argument gets more complex. Is ethanol an eco-friendly alternative to gasoline, or does its production create more environmental problems than the fuel solves as the debate heats up over research conducted by the U of M,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ethanolargumentgetsmorecomplex.pdf>

Ethanol byproduct benefits farmers. With ethanol producers creating the distillers grain byproduct, ranchers and feedlot owners use it to replace some of the grain corn and protein supplements in cattle feed, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ethanolbyproductbenefitsfarmers.pdf>

Garbage burning under fire from environmentalists. Garbage incineration in general, and the Perham Resource Recovery Facility specifically, have come under fire from some environmental activists over air quality and other environmental impacts,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/garbageburningunderfire.pdf>

Ham Lake approves ordinance that addresses storm water run-off and pollution. The Ham Lake City Council unanimously adopted an ordinance that addresses how to reduce storm water

run-off and water pollution in the community,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/hamlakeapprovesordinance.pdf>

Too dirty to breathe. EPA announced a modest tightening of the smog standard, overruling the unanimous advice of its scientific advisory council for more protective standard, which recommended 60 to 70 parts per billion, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/toodirtytobreath.pdf>

President Bush intervened to settle dispute over smog rule. EPA agreed to weaken a key section of its new smog requirements after being told at the last minute that President Bush preferred a less stringent approach,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/presidentbushintervenssmogrule.pdf>

Midwest carbon market talks get underway. It's hard enough for people in Minnesota to agree on how to cut carbon emissions to fight global warming. Imagine getting MN to agree with Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas and the Manitoba,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/midwestcarbonmarkettalks.pdf>

Two Harbors high school gets environmental award. Two Harbors High School is one of 12 recipients of the Governor's Awards for Waste and Pollution Prevention, in the partnership category for superior environmental achievement by collaboration,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/twoharborenvironmentalaward.pdf>

Wind turbines spinning at ethanol plant. Two wind turbines are now providing half of the necessary power to operate Corn Plus in Winnebago,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/windturbinesspinethanolplant.pdf>

Ric Fohrman: Clean-car legislation will help, won't hurt. According to Ric Fohrman, "Gasoline prices are at an all-time high. Manufactures of imported cars are outpacing the domestics. And our American automakers are scratching their heads,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/clean-car-legislation-will-help.pdf>

Corn-powered Mankato lab to boost biofuel industry. Minnesota State University-Mankato is moving forward with plans to build a high-tech auto emissions lab that will be unique to the Upper Midwest, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/cornpoweredmankatolab.pdf>

Minn. Biodiesel Plant Suspends Operations. The rising cost of soybean oil, a main ingredient in biodiesel, has led a New Jersey company to shut down, delayed construction of a plant in Nebraska, and now forced a Minnesota producer to temporarily suspend operations and lay off dozens of employees, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnbiodieselplantssuspendsoperation.pdf>

Wal-Mart's latest green store cuts energy use up to 45 percent. Wal-Mart Stores Inc. will open its latest generation of energy-efficient test stores this week with a Las Vegas Supercenter that uses new cooling technology to cut overall energy use by up to 45 percent,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/walmartgreenstorecutsenergy.pdf>

Times Writers Group: Water issues spark questions. Water has been the focus of some alarming media attention lately, which stirred up the fear that our drinking water isn't safe,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/waterissuesparkquestions.pdf>

Climate bill costs debated. North Dakota would lose up to 4,100 jobs in 2020 and Minnesota up to 33,735 jobs because of high costs associated with a climate-change bill if it is passed in Congress, according to a Washington-based researcher,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/climatebillcostsdebated.pdf>;

- **Experts disagree on benefits of global warming bill,**
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/expertsdisagreeonbenefitsglobal.pdf>: and

- **Green forum heated – Global warming vs. loss of jobs in ND,**
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/globalwarmingvsjobloss.pdf>

Students urged to go green, start recycling. Student Council members at Owatonna High School are encouraging their peers to recycle bottles and cans,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/studentsurgedtogreen.pdf>

Next Dialogues will discuss the consequences of ethanol. The Post-Bulleting newspaper will be hosting a community forum on the ethanol issue on Tuesday, March 25th,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ethanoldebate.pdf>

Lois Quam: Minnesota, Norway and a clean-energy future. Historic ties and complementary resources make us perfect partners in tackling the challenge presented by climate change,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnnorwaycleanenergyfuture.pdf>

New effort urges kids to enjoy outdoors. Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever have launched a “No Child Left Indoors” initiative to get youth unplugged from electronics and turned on to the outdoors, nature and wildlife, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/neweffortkidsoutdoors.pdf>

School would let nature be the teacher. A proposed Woodbury charter school would take its 60 or so elementary students outdoors to learn about the environment,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/schoolletnaturebeteacher.pdf>

Many a time have I merely closed my eyes at the end of yet another troublesome day and soaked my bruised psyche in wild water, rivers remembered and rivers imagined. Rivers course through my dreams, rivers cold and fast, rivers well-known and rivers nameless, rivers that seem like ribbons of blue water twisting through wide valleys, narrow rivers folded in layers of darkening shadows, rivers that have eroded down deep into a mountain's belly, sculpted the land. Peeled back the planet's history exposing the texture of time itself. – Harry Middleton

The Minnesota River Watershed Alliance (Watershed Alliance) is an organized network of citizens, public agencies, and private organizations dedicated to communicating the benefits of an ecology healthy Minnesota River Watershed to others and are actively working towards its improvement and protection. We meet four times a year and encourage landowners and recreational users of the river to be part of the effort. For more information on the Watershed Alliance: <http://www.watershedalliance.blogspot.com>

Please register at the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance's bulletin board at:
<http://mail.mnsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/mrwa> to receive regular updates on what is happening in the Minnesota River Watershed.

Thanks,

Scott

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