

# **Hotline Update**

News for Wright-Hennepin members

February 2016

## You're invited to WH's 2016 Annual Meeting on March 31!

On Thursday, March 31, Wright-Hennepin (WH) will celebrate its 2016 Annual Meeting. The event is hosted at WH's headquarters in Rockford, Minn. – 6800 Electric Drive – and is free to all members. Registration begins at 4 p.m., with a complimentary pork chop dinner served from 4:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. A short business meeting will follow at 7 p.m. Free parking and shuttles will be available.

### **Business Meeting**

This year's theme is "The Empowered Member." WH's new CEO, Tim Sullivan, and WH Holding Company's new chief operating officer, Wendy Youngren will address members. A grand prize drawing of a retired vehicle from WH's fleet will immediately follow the meeting. In addition, many booth prizes will be drawn the day after the meeting. At the end of the business meeting all members will receive a free pound of butter as an attendance gift.

### Free events and activities

There will be plenty of fun and exciting activities, including coloring and crafts, for children ages 2-10, from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Attending members will have the opportunity to win prizes by playing bingo from 4:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Informational booths highlighting WH's programs and services, and things that are new at the co-op, open at 4 p.m. Additional information is available at www.whe.org, and additional meeting information will be published in your Annual Report in March.

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Check out the new look of the Hotline Update!

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Wright-Hennepin will host a night filled with food, fun, prizes and activities for all at our 79th Annual Meeting! Above left: Get ready to win more great prizes during bingo from 4:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Above right: There's something for everyone at our Annual Meeting, especially kids. Turn them loose in our kids' area that features games, toys, face painting, and much more! Above center: Come hungry, because we'll once again be featuring a complimentary pork chop dinner.



# Competitive rates and the empowered member

right-Hennepin has a long history of delivering competitive electric rates at or below those of our neighbor, Xcel Energy. No part of our core mission is more important, and we're proud to have consistently delivered on this commitment for years.

But what might be less appreciated is that Wright-Hennepin has been accomplishing its competitive goals while providing you with more tools and options to manage your energy choices – and your energy costs – than ever before. In fact, by any measure, Wright-Hennepin members are more empowered today to manage their own energy destinies than at any other time in our history. Even better, it's going to improve from here (more on that in a moment).

But it wasn't always this way.

In the early 80s, Wright-Hennepin's rates were almost 30 percent higher than Northern States Power Company (the predecessor to Xcel). Thanks to relentless and determined focus from the Board and management, Wright-Hennepin first reduced that margin, then achieved parity, and then delivered rates consistently better than Xcel.

As positive as this is, it's only part of the story. Wright-Hennepin today offers members the widest array of energy choices and management strategies in our history. Consider:

- Our widely used Off-Peak programs allow members to purchase half-priced energy for heating and cooling while reducing the cooperative's exposure to the wholesale power market, which helps everyone.
- Our MyMeter program allows you to use the Internet to track (and therefore to manage) your energy use on a daily hasis
- On-bill financing allows you to purchase high-efficiency LED light bulbs in a way that meets your budget.

- community solar programs allow you to purchase clean, non-carbon energy.
- And very soon, Wright-Hennepin will announce a wide range of powerful new rebates and incentives to make energy-saving technologies for your home more accessible and affordable.

The world of energy supply is also rapidly changing and Wright-Hennepin is evolving with it. Regulators, public policymakers and consumers want ever greater use of renewables and more carbon-free or carbon-reduced fuel options. Wright-Hennepin is committed to working with our power suppliers to deliver this cleaner, lower-carbon energy to you in a way that is consistent with affordable, reliable service.

This changing world also means Wright-Hennepin's rates and rate options need to be updated and modernized. That's why, in recent months, a highly reputable outside engineering firm has conducted an extensive study to ensure our electric rates are competitive, maximize consumer options, and ensure financial stability for the cooperative. To provide just one example, the last time both the base electric charge and the residential electric rate were adjusted was shortly after the release of Michael Jackson's "Thriller" album in 1982.

But whatever the industry developments or changes in programs and rates, on this you can rely: Wright-Hennepin will deliver the power, products and competitive pricing our members desire. Going forward, the Wright-Hennepin member will be more empowered to make energy choices customized to your own values, priorities, and pocketbook needs. After all, that's what being a member of Wright-Hennepin is all about!

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### **Board Report**

# **December Board Meeting Highlights:**

The regular monthly meeting of the board of directors was held December 10, 2015. A quorum of directors was present. Board action taken:

- Approved necessary corporate bank documents appointing CEO and CFO as signers.
- Approved revenue deferral resolution due to anticipated future wholesale power cost increases.
- Approved the 2016 work plan and budget.
- Reviewed recommended rate changes, as well as rate and tariffs policies.
- Selected directors to attend 2016 Washington DC visits.
- Heard a report on WH's Conservation Improvement Program.
- Directors reported on industry meetings they attended on behalf of the cooperative.
- Reviewed and filed the monthly CEO, legal, financial, and operations reports.
- The WH and Operation Round Up (ORU) Boards met and heard the annual ORU report of 2015 activities.

### January Board Meeting Highlights:

The regular monthly meeting of Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association's Board of Directors was held January 14, 2016. A quorum of directors was present. Board action taken:

- Approved Minnesota Rural Electric Association's 2016 membership dues.
- Approved notice of 2016 Annual Meeting and tentative agenda for Thursday, March 31, 2016 with registration beginning at 4 p.m. and the business meeting at 7 p.m. at the cooperative's headquarters in Rockford.
- Approved updated rate and tariff policies.
- Approved required Rural Utility Service resolutions appointing CEO and CFO as signers.
- Approved vehicle retirements

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· Our renewable energy and

### What is the Clean Power Plan?

You may have heard about the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recently released Clean Power Plan (CPP).

The goal of the CPP is to reduce carbon emissions from power plants fueled by coal, oil and natural gas, essentially cutting emissions from the nation's electric power sector by 32 percent from levels recorded in 2005 by 2030. However, requirements vary by state. Minnesota's target reduction is 40 percent, while North Dakota - where Wright-Hennepin (WH) purchases most of its electricity - is tasked with a 45 percent carbon reduction, one of the highest in the nation.

Carbon reduction targets can be met in state plans in multiple ways including:

- Increasing the generating efficiency of existing coal plants
- Substituting natural gas generation for coal
- Substituting generation from renewable sources
- General energy efficiency

Because state implementation plans for the CPP are yet to be written, WH is uncertain of the specific cost impacts for our membership. However, based on what we know right now,



The Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan aims to drastically reduce carbon emissions by 2030.

our best estimate is that WH's purchase power costs will likely increase 10-30 percent over and above other rate increases that may be required between now and 2030.

WH is also concerned about power reliability under the CPP due to the large and rapid retirement of coal plants throughout the Midwest. Power from these baseload plants will need to be replaced by power from renewable and natural gas resources, but it is uncertain how much new generation will be needed and how fast it can come on line.

On this you can rely: WH will continue to keep you informed about the CPP and other public policies that impact the affordability and reliability of your electricity!

# Cold weather energy-saving tips

A t this point we're all hoping the worst of winter is behind us, but any seasoned Minnesotan knows just how long the snow and cold can linger. If you haven't already, take these tips into consideration and save some energy for the remainder of the winter season:

• The days are already getting longer, so allow your home to soak up as much free heat as possible from the sun by leaving blinds open on south-facing windows.

If you regularly use an engine-block heater on your vehicle, set it on a timer so it's not charging all night. Most engines only need to be heated four hours prior to use.

- Close the damper on your fireplace when not in use.
- Give your air vents as much room to breathe as possible.
- Change your furnace filter monthly.
   This is something we say a lot, but it's an easy way to save money and ensure your furnace is working properly.
- Have your heating system inspected annually by a professional.
- Seal any air leaks you notice, and insulate your attic.
- Cover drafty windows with a window insulator kit, or use heavy drapes.
- Turn your water heater down to the warm setting (120° F) if you are not on an Off-Peak program.
- Consider installing a plenum heater that allows you to switch between electric and propane for heating your home.

For more energy-saving tips, check out the WH Blog at http://goo.gl/VUIVdY, and watch our videos at https://goo.gl/pkxK2Y.

## Fuel prices have you on a crazy ride?



# Off-Peak can help keep your costs level!

While gas prices have fluctuated greatly over the past few years, the cost of electricity has remained very stable. Whether you have a cold room, or are looking for an efficient way to heat your whole home, Wright-Hennepin offers electric solutions with approximately half-priced electricity. And, with the stable price of electricity, you won't have to worry about big swings in pricing – you can save those crazy rides for your next trip to the amusement park.



Call and ask about our Off-Peak programs today at (763) 477-3000



## Co-op connections featured "Deal of the month":

\$10 off any repair or service call, or receive a free Honeywell thermostat with installation of a new furnace or AC unit from WestAir Heating & Cooling, at 11184 River Rd. NE in Hanover.

Offer valid when showing your FREE Co-op Connections card to the cashier. Another benefit of being a WH member! Lost your card? No problem. For a free replacement call (763) 477-3000. For more deals visit: http://www.connections.coop.



# Deadlines for scholarships and Youth Tour approaching

In keeping with our commitment to build local communities, Wright-Hennepin (WH) will once again offer 20 scholarships to help local students continue their education. We'll also send one lucky member to attend the cooperative's youth tour. The upcoming deadlines and an overview of each are as follows:



- **Scholarships:**
- The WH local schools scholarships are awarded to one student of each public school in WH's service territory. Funding is through unclaimed capital credits and WH Holding – a wholly-owned subsidiary of WH. Please check with your guidance counselor, as each school has a different deadline. These applications should be submitted to your school.
- The "At-Large" scholarship is for students who attend private schools, home schools or schools that neighbor WH's electric service territory. Funding is through unclaimed capital credits and WH Holding – a wholly-owned subsidiary of WH. The deadline is March 31, 2016. These applications should be submitted to WH.
- The Edward R. Slebiska memorial line worker scholarship is for students wishing to pursue a career as a line worker. Funding is through WH. The deadline is April 22, 2016. These applications should be submitted to WH.
- The Elwyn and Hazel Knickerbocker memorial scholarship is for students wishing to pursue a career as a line worker. Funding is through the Knickerbocker family. The deadline is April 22, 2016. These applications should be submitted to WH.

- The Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship is for students who are dependents of WH members. Funding is through Basin Electric. The deadline is February 12, 2016. These applications should be submitted to WH.
- For additional scholarship details and to download an application, please visit http://goo.gl/xr8d8. Or, call (763) 477-3000 to have one mailed to you.

### **Youth Tour**

Each year, WH sponsors one high school junior from its electric service territory to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program, which is held in Washington, D.C. More than 1,500 students from 43 states participate in the tour.

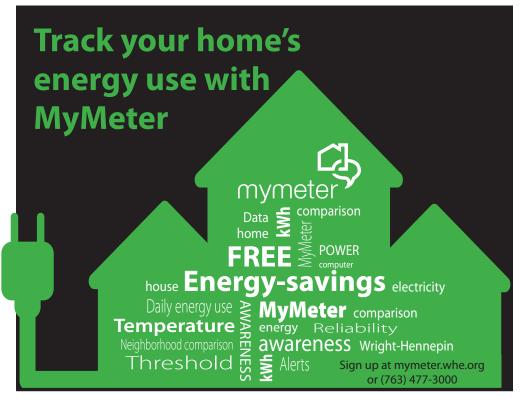
The youth tour gives high school students a glimpse into how our nation's capital operates and a flavor for our nation's history. Students selected to participate in the program have the opportunity to travel to Capitol Hill to meet some of Minnesota's senators and representatives.

Additionally, a full itinerary is planned for the students, which typically includes trips to the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials, Arlington National Cemetery, Marine Sunset Parade, Smithsonian Museum and much more.

High school juniors are encouraged to submit an application for a chance to be selected to attend this all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. from June 11-16, 2016. Applications need to be postmarked by March 4, 2016. To receive an application, visit http://goo.gl/Y84WEU. More information can be received by visiting www.youthtour.coop.

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR





# • Wright-Hennepin members donate more than \$43,000 to help local organizations

Wright-Hennepin (WH) members who participate in Operation Round Up (ORU) donated grants totaling \$43,560 in December of 2015.

ORU participants allow their electric bills to be rounded up to the nearest dollar. The rounded amount is then used for donations to fund local programs. More than 80 percent of WH's members participate in the ORU program. ORU's board manages the generated money, which is held in a trust fund. Through a selection process and review of guidelines, the board evaluates funding requests on a bimonthly basis.

The ORU trust board approved the following donations on behalf of WH members for December 2015:

- \$3,000, Angel Bears of Hope, funds to support the gift of an Angel Bear to children and adults with life threatening diseases
- \$1,000 Annandale Food Shelf, funds to support weekend food programs in Maple Lake and Annandale
- \$3,500, Buffalo Stampede Special Olympics, funds to support a new Special Olympic floor hockey team
- \$5,000, Can Do Canines, funds to provide assistance dogs free of charge to clients
- \$9,050, Catholic Charities Senior Dining, funds to support Meals on Wheels in Maple Lake, Annandale and Buffalo
- \$5,000, Children's Home Society and Family Services, funds to support adoption programs
- \$500, Confidence Learning Center, funds to provide scholarship assistance for campers with disabilities



Operation Round Up recently awarded a grant to WeCAN in the amount of \$10,000 to assist the needy with emergency assistance. ORU Secretary Sharon Glessing (left) presented the grant to WeCan Board Chair Linda Blakstredt.

- \$2,000, Friends of the Buffalo Library, funds to purchase new books for the library
- \$2,110, FYCC, funds to support purchase of bike lights on youth bikes for safety
- \$200, Maple Grove Grad Party, funds to support an all-night safe party
- \$2,000, Relate Counseling Center, funds to support answering service and on-call counselors
- \$200, STMA Grad Party, funds to support an all-night safe party
- \$10,000, WeCAN, funds to assist needy with emergency assistance

For those interested in applying for funds, fill out an application. To receive an application and to see what types of activities Operation Round Up supports – visit WH's website at http://goo.gl/zabYRy, send an email to oru@whe.org, or call Lisa and leave a message at (763) 477-3000 extension 6126.

# OWH drills emergency response scenario

In December of 2015 Wright-Hennepin (WH) employees participated in an annual emergency response preparedness simulation.

The objective of these annual simulations is to ensure our employees react and respond quickly and effectively to multiple emergency circumstances that could potentially affect the service area.

These scenarios are also valuable in developing preventative measures your cooperative can take to minimize the potential for such situations.

WH's emergency response planning includes three main aspects:

- Vulnerability and Risk Assessment:
   The largest threats are identified along with mitigation strategies.
- Emergency Response Plan Document:
   This is the action plan utilized when a disaster occurs.
- Annual Drill: Employees simulate the actual events.

Wright and Hennepin County Emergency Management personnel also participated in the event, and provided valuable insight for our employee group throughout the exercise.

WH has drilled a variety of scenarios, including tornadoes, ice storms, damage/ destruction to its headquarters, and mayday situations.



## Lineman interns stay busy over winter break



WH line worker interns Blake Paumen (left, Maple Lake) and Noah Haaland (Monticello) spent the winter break away from the classroom to get some hands-on experience at WH. A pair of line worker students recently Completed a two-week internship with Wright-Hennepin (WH). Students Blake Paumen and Noah Haaland had a chance to apply what they've learned in the classroom to the field.

"It was very helpful," Haaland said of the internship. "It really put everything we've been learning on the whiteboard into perspective and gave us a better understanding of what's all going on."

The interns learned and practiced electrical safety as a part of their training. In addition, they helped with a number of projects under the supervision of experienced WH linemen.

Some of these projects included maintaining and repairing power lines and equipment, switching out power poles and hooking up new electric services. They even took part in placing a 24-ton switch house on WH's campus.

Both are currently attending the Electrical Lineworker Technology program at Minnesota State University in Wadena.

Along with an internship program, WH also offers scholarships for line worker training. Please see the story on page 4 for more information about the scholarships available.

# Cold bathroom floor?

### Check out in-floor heat from HeatMyFloors.com

HeatMyFloors.com products can be installed under almost any flooring type:

√ Tile √ Wood **√** Carpet √ Laminate



Make your bathroom more comfortable today!



Visit our website, or contact us today:

(763) 477-3665, or info@HeatMyFloors.com

### Counter carbon monoxide this winter

id you know that November, December, January and February are top months for carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning incidents? CO is a poisonous, colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas. At high levels CO can be dangerous to human health and even threaten your life, but luckily it is very preventable. Here is what you can do to protect you and your family from CO this winter:

- Make sure that air vents are not blocked.
- Do not use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Never use a charcoal grill indoors, even in a fireplace.
- Avoid sleeping in a room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.
- Never idle the car in a garage, even if the garage door is open. Fumes can build up very quickly in the garage and living area of your home.
- Do not use any gasoline-powered engines (mowers, weed trimmers, snow blowers, chain saws, small engines or generators) in enclosed spaces.
- Never ignore symptoms, particularly if more



than one person is feeling them.

If CO poisoning is suspected, exit the space immediately and call 911.

In addition to the CO information above, it is very important to have a CO sensor in your home. Because carbon monoxide is toxic, colorless, odorless and tasteless it makes it very difficult to detect without a sensitive CO detector. WH Security has CO sensors that monitor air quality inside your home. These sensors are monitored 24/7 by our monitoring center, which contacts you or medical personnel immediately in the event CO is detected.

For more information, please visit http://goo.gl/Yswc8s or call a WH Security representative at (763) 477-3664.

# Vehicle up for sealed bid auction

Wright-Hennepin (WH) is selling a used vehicle "as is" by sealed bid. The vehicle can be seen during regular business hours at WH's office in Rockford. For more information about the vehicle, please call Jeff Hofford at (763) 477-3126.

Bids must be received by March 4. Bids can be mailed or faxed to: Wright-Hennepin, Attn: Scott Zipp, PO Box 330, Rockford, MN 55373; fax (763) 477-3054. WH reserves the right to reject any and all bids. The winning bidder will be notified by phone after March 8.



For sale as is: 2005 Chevrolet ½ ton 4WD pickup, 5.3L auto, 173,000 miles.

## Why you might see a WH line worker on your property

t's standard practice at Wright-Hennepin (WH) to inspect our power lines and equipment throughout the service territory on a regular basis.

For lines that run underground, WH line workers will check the transformer box. pedestals, and other ground-mounted equipment, which is usually located in a member's yard.

This equipment is typically located in the utility's right-of-way, and our crews need safe access to it at all times. Please be aware that WH line crews may be on

your property to complete this work.

We appreciate your understanding during this time. Please know our crews are doing this for the benefit of all our members. These inspections are crucial for maintaining service, and typically take place between January and April.

If you have a new phone number that is not listed on your account, please call us at (763) 477-3000 to update your information. Depending upon the work needed, your power may need to be shut off briefly, in which case we will notify you.



If you have a transformer box in your yard similar to the one shown here, you may see WH line crews on your property performing an inspection.



### tenKsolar Winner

ROXANNE PETERSON of Maple Grove wins a credit for 130 kWh, November's output from WH's tenKsolar panel array.

MICHAEL SAER of Plymouth wins a credit for 47 kWh, December's output from WH's tenKsolar panel array.



### **Solar Winner**

DIANE PETERSON of Maple Grove wins a credit for 169 kWh, November's output from WH's solar panels.

DARRIN ROSHA of Maple Plain wins a credit for 67 kWh, December's output from WH's solar panels.



### **Wind Winner**

DWIGHT WHITTLEF of Buffalo wins a credit of 1,310 kWh, November's output from WH's wind generator.

VERN HAMMER of Buffalo wins a credit for 794 kWh, December's output from WH's wind generator.

### Average monthly energy output over 12 months:

Wind generator: 845 kWh Solar panels: 226 kWh tenKsolar system: 204 kWh To enter the monthly contest to win the output from WH's wind generator or solar panels, go to: http://goo.ql/QjyTM.

## WH's 2016 Annual Meeting on March 31!

### Continued from cover

#### **Director Elections**

WH will also conduct elections for Districts 4, 6 and 8. The 2016 Annual Report will be mailed to members in March and will include detailed information about each director candidate. Director ballots will be

sent to members in Districts 4, 6 and 8 before the meeting. Ballots can be cast by mail, in-person at the meeting, or electronically, which is new this year. At the end of the business meeting, WH will announce the results of the director elections. For more details on the event, and a recap of last year, visit: http://goo.gl/CvEcZk.



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## **Board Report**

### **Continued from Page 2**

of a 2000 International Bucket
Truck (to offer for bids to local area
contractors), a 2007 Chevy Express
van (to trade towards a replacement),
a 2005 Chevrolet ½ ton 4WD pickup
(to offer for bids to the membership)
and a 2003 Chevrolet ½ ton 4WD
pickup (to offer as a giveaway at the
2016 Annual Meeting).

- Selected voting delegates and alternates for the 2016 Federated Rural Electric Insurance Corporation and National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative.
- Heard report on WH's annual Emergency Response Plan Drill.
- Heard results of the 2015
   Commercial and Industrial Member
   America Customer Satisfaction Index
   (ACSI) survey.
- Reviewed and filed the monthly CEO, legal, and operations reports.
- Directors reported on industry meetings they attended on behalf of the cooperative.

#### **Guests included:**

- A Great River Energy executive who gave an update on the Clean Power Plan.
- A National Rural Electric Cooperative Association consultant who provided an overview of the state of the electric storage industry.

# New ballots and option for voting

Wright-Hennepin (WH) members will notice a slightly new "look" to the voting ballots for this year's director elections.

Per the Bylaws, WH can offer the option of online voting. You will receive a paper ballot and may continue to vote by mail or vote at the annual meeting as you have done in the past. The third option, which is new for 2016, is the option to vote online. Instructions for all three options will be included with your ballot. If you have any questions after receiving your ballot, please call (763) 477-3027.



Keep an eye out for this envelope, in which your new ballot will arrive.

#### **Board of Directors:**

District 1: Timothy Young, Annandale
District 2: Duane "Butch" Lindenfelser, Monticello
District 3: Burton Horsch, Howard Lake
District 4: Dale Jans, Buffalo
District 5: Chris Lantto, Annandale
District 6: Mike Tieva, Maple Grove
District 7: Kenneth Hiebel, Plymouth
District 8: Donald Lucas, Maple Grove
District 9: Erick Heinz, Corcoran

WH President and CEO: Tim Sullivan WH CFO: Angie Pribyl WH Holding COO: Wendy Youngren

**Hotline Update** 

February 2016 News for Wright-Hennepin members





6800 Electric Drive Rockford, MN 55373

# Keep in touch with your cooperative!

#### Member Call Center Hours (all year):

7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday - Friday (763) 477-3000 or (800) 943-2667

#### **Office Hours:**

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday (Labor Day - Memorial Day)

7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday (Memorial day - Labor day)

#### To report an outage:

Electric dispatchers are available 24/7 **Call:** (763) 477-3100 or (888) 399-1845

### **WH Security monitoring:**

Security dispatchers are available 24/7 **Call:** (763) 477-4275 or (800) 858-7811

Website: www.whe.org

Email: info@whe.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/

WrightHennepin

Twitter: @WrightHennepin

# New rate option available for solar communities

Good news for members interested in joining our third solar community: there's a new rate option available from WH Solar.

Members can now choose to get an immediate 4 percent discount on the portion of your electric bill that comes from solar with no upfront cost. This rate is a great option for those worried about the risk of paying for panels upfront, and want to see immediate and steady savings. It's also a great way to go solar with zero risk.

Still available are the two original rate options from WH Solar: paying \$0 upfront with a 15.5 rate per kWh; or purchasing your panels in full upfront. Those enrolled in one of these options are able to take advantage of the new rate should they choose to do so.



If you are interested in community solar, there are still spots left in our third solar community that is expected to break ground in 2016. For more information on rates and community solar, check out WH Solar's web page at http://goo.gl/Qt7zWK, or call (763) 477-3000 and ask to speak with a representative today.



WH Solar's first two solar communities, which are housed at Wright-Hennepin's headquarters.