

News Release

WRIGHT-HENNEPIN TO PROVIDE SOLAR POWER OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS

Rockford, Minn. (July 2, 2012) — Solar energy has become more popular in recent years as more people are looking for cleaner, renewable sources of energy. To give its members the opportunity to have their own solar panels without having to install equipment on their property, Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association (WH) is developing a community solar project.

A meeting for WH members who are interested in participating in this project will be conducted at 7 p.m. on July 10 at WH's Rockford headquarters, located at 6800 Electric Drive.

A solar community offers several advantages to members who are interested in using solar energy, as many people are unable to install solar panels on their property due to trees, house style or orientation, and other factors. Cost of solar panels, maintenance and long term return on investment also impact solar panel ownership decisions. This larger scale project – designed for multiple members – can provide lower expenses for members who would like to install solar panels, but are looking for a more cost-effective solution.

WH is working with tenKsolar – a company based in Minneapolis, Minn. – to install a 39,000 watt solar panel array at the cooperative's headquarters in Rockford, Minn. A unique aspect of this project is the addition of a battery storage system manufactured by Silent Power – a company in Baxter, Minn. Some of the energy collected from the solar panels will be stored in these batteries and used during times of WH's system peak energy demand, which will reduce the strain on the electric grid.

Members will be able to purchase individual panels out of the 39,000 watt system and will in turn have their proportionate share of the kilowatt-hour output of those panels deducted from their monthly bills.

At the July 10 meeting, WH and its partners will provide an overview of the project and answer any questions members may have. Members who would like to attend this meeting should call (763) 477-3000.

WH is a member-owned non-profit electric utility that provides electric power to Wright County and the western part of Hennepin County. The cooperative has been a corporate citizen in this area since 1937 and currently serves more than 46,000 electric accounts. The utility started its security division in 1989 that provides local home security solutions as well as monitors alarm systems for more than 50,000 customers in 32 states and three Canadian provinces.

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