

## New template helps counties assess energy use and renewable energy potential

What if it was possible to match up local renewable energy sources with local energy demand and lessen the reliance on non-local, non-renewable energy?

An energy assessment of four counties conducted by West Central Initiative and the Northwest Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) may help do just that.

WCI intern Rena Stigen spent several weeks compiling energy usage information from the counties of Becker, Clay, Otter Tail and Wilkin. She entered the data into templates created by 6Solutions LLC (funded by Agricultural Utilization Research Institute) that can estimate each county's renewable energy potential as well as energy use. The template can be replicated for use in other counties.

The estimates from this project revealed the great potential for renewable energy production in select counties of west central Minnesota. "For example, in Otter Tail County, even without taking into account solar and geothermal potential, the data showed how the renewable energy estimate could cover five times the estimated usage total from residential, transportation, agricultural and industrial energy," said Rena about her findings.

With more and more people recognizing the wealth of renewable energy potential, an increasing amount of options for harnessing and harvesting that energy are becoming available. People are finding more efficient and economical ways to produce earth-friendly energy options that make sense for our communities and our future.

Go to [www.wcif.org/?countyenergy](http://www.wcif.org/?countyenergy) to read the full report, look at estimates for the four counties and download an estimator for your county.

For information about the project, contact Greg Wagner, economic development planner, at 800 735-2239, or [greg@wcif.org](mailto:greg@wcif.org).



The next U.S. Census commences mid-March 2010. Did you know there are only 10 questions to answer? It's easy-peasy! Learn more at [www.mn2010census.org](http://www.mn2010census.org)

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QUARTERLY REPORT | September 2009

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*Working with Communities  
to Create Opportunities*

## An aging nation—and region—needs RNs equipped for elder care

*From the aches and pains of stiffening joints to serious health complications, nurses need to be trained to handle all the needs of an aging population with skill and compassion.*

The nation is aging. In west central and central Minnesota, the population between 60 and 85-plus years of age will grow by 25 percent—or nearly 12,000 people—in just 10 years, from 2005 to 2015, said Nate Dorr, regional labor market analyst for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

"Even farther down the road, the numbers are more dramatic, showing a 64 percent increase, or just over 30,000 people, from 2005 to 2025," he continued.

From the aches and pains of stiffening joints to serious health complications, nurses need to be trained to handle all the needs of an aging population with skill and compassion.

The need isn't just critical for these highly trained RNs, it's urgent.

DEED's studies also estimate that from 2004

to 2014 more than 3,000 health care jobs could be added in west central and central Minnesota alone, with a large portion of these focusing on care for the elderly.

WCI is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a two-year Partners Investing in Nursing's Future (PIN) grant of \$192,241 to help fund Building Faculty Capacity in Geriatric Nursing for Central Minnesota. This project is aimed at helping regional schools of nursing have an intentional focus on geriatric nursing in their curriculum.

PIN grant article continued inside.



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- Why rural matters
- A mental health break for our kids
- New template helps counties assess energy use and renewable energy potential

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### our mission

Serving to improve west central Minnesota through funding, programs and technical assistance.

### our vision

Uniting ideas and resources to help people and communities create a better tomorrow.



## PIN grant continued

Its ultimate goal is to increase the number of competent registered nurses providing nursing care to elderly persons in a variety of settings in 15 counties in Minnesota.

WCI, Central Minnesota Academic Health Education Center (AHEC) and the University of Minnesota School of Nursing's Hartford Center of Geriatric Nursing Excellence (MnHCGNE) worked together to submit the proposal to Partners Investing in Nursing's Future, which is a unique national initiative led by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Northwest Health Foundation that works to address the long-term shortage of available nurses across the country.

The PIN initiative directors are hoping that local and regional foundations create a domino effect – where innovative ideas are tested locally and shared nationally with an exponential effect on the workforce shortage.

The primary strategy of the Building Faculty Capacity project is to help regional schools of nursing have an intentional focus on geriatric nursing in their curriculum.

“We’re planning a ‘grow your own’ approach to nursing workforce development by increasing the number of faculty in west central and central Minnesota with expertise in teaching geriatric nursing,” said Dr. Christine Mueller, associate professor and chair of the University of Minnesota’s Adult and Gerontological Health Cooperative. Mueller is developing the curriculum for the project.

“A key factor in exciting nursing students about a career working with the elderly is ensuring

## Thank you, funding partners!

Additional funding partners for the PIN project include the Minnesota Area Health Education Center, Lake Region Healthcare Corporation, Frank W. Veden Charitable Trust, Minnesota Area Geriatric Education Center (MAGEC), MAGEC Central, The Initiative Foundation, Care Ventures, Otter Tail County Public Health, Wilkin County Public Health, West Central Initiative and an anonymous private donor.

they have diverse and exemplary geriatric-focused clinical experiences,” she said. “Through the grant, we’ll be able to offer workshops to faculty from the schools of nursing in the region, and to representatives from health care organizations, who will help co-create these great clinical experiences for students.”

“What’s exciting about this project is that it puts attention on geriatrics, and that’s never been a big focus in nursing programs,” said Chere Rikimoto, administrator/CEO of Traverse Care Center in Wheaton, Minn., and a WCI board member.

“Nurses and nursing programs have often thought the only place you can use your complete skill set is in a hospital. That’s just not the case. RNs in a care center, home health or assisted living setting are doing assessments on a daily basis because there’s no doctor on duty. They are involved in complete care,” she said.

Rikimoto pointed out that geriatric nursing skills are needed in nearly every health care setting, from clinics to hospital medical-surgical units.

“Schools of nursing see the need and realize it’s time to change,” she said.

## Learn the basic steps to starting your own business

**D**o you have a great business idea but no concept of the steps it takes to make it a reality?

You’re not alone. That’s why VP of Business Development Dale Umlauf has put together this helpful guide to starting your own venture: *Basic Steps for Starting a Business*.



Lack of planning is one of the top reasons a business start-up fails. This guide provides you with tools and resources to help you with the planning process, including:

- How to write a business plan
- Loan package checklist
- Revenue and expense worksheet
- Important contacts
- Financing sources

Download the guide today on our Web site, [www.wcif.org](http://www.wcif.org), and feel free to call Dale with any questions at 800 735-2239.

## Why rural matters

**H**ere in Mid-America, we’ve been called the “fly-over states” practically since the airplane was invented. But rural America matters in ways people haven’t even thought of, writes WCI President Nancy Straw in a recent white paper: “Why Rural Matters: The Social Innovation Fund and Rural Innovation.”

Here are just some of the reasons cited in the paper:

- Rural matters if you care about issues of poverty and race because 245 of the nation’s 250 most persistently poor counties are in rural America and most of the high-poverty rural counties also have high concentrations of minorities.
- Rural matters if you care about urban because urban and rural places are inextricably linked within regions—they share labor and housing markets, industry clusters and retail economies, so when one is distressed the other can not live up to its potential.

Read the white paper at [www.wcif.org](http://www.wcif.org). Click on “Publications.”

- And rural matters if you care about measuring impact because smaller communities are an ideal test bed for social innovation and modest investments in a rural area can serve a high proportion of those targeted by a specific innovation.

Nancy was invited to submit the white paper to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) for review and consideration. The organization is compiling a Notice of Funding Availability for the Social Innovation Fund. Nancy wanted to make sure rural innovation would be an integral part of overall social innovation. She collaborated with colleagues around the nation to compile the document, including consultant Alan McGregor from Asheville, N.C., Dee Davis, president of The Center for Rural Strategies, Whitesburg, Ky., Chuck Hasebrook, executive director of the Center for Rural Affairs in Lyons, Neb., and Janet Topolsky and John Molinaro from the Aspen Institute’s Community Strategies Group in Washington D.C.

## Kim Embretson goes the distance as a CFRE

**A**t West Central Initiative, our staff go the extra mile to get the education and skills they need to better serve our region. Take our Vice President of Development Kim Embretson, for example. Three years ago he undertook the rigorous process of becoming a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE). Candidates for the CFRE must show tenure in the profession, education, a demonstrated fundraising achievement and a commitment to service to not-for-profit organizations. In short, he needed to show he was good at and committed to his work at WCI!

As a CFRE, you can’t rest on your laurels once you’ve achieved certification. Every three years, Kim needs to show CFRE International that he possesses the knowledge, skills and commitment to perform fundraising duties in an effective, conscientious, ethical and professional manner. Kim heard recently that he has indeed been recertified for another three years.

WCI has not one but TWO CFRE executives on staff. Donor Services Officer Tom McSparron also received certification. Both Kim and Tom would love to flex their CFRE muscles for you. If you



PHOTO: Kim goes the extra mile as a CFRE and as a cyclist—he rides his bike to work almost every day. Kim blogs about pedal power at [savetimes3.blogspot.com](http://savetimes3.blogspot.com).

## A mental health break for our youngest children

**I**n 2003, 13 Early Childhood Initiative communities formed in west central Minnesota. Each community conducted perception surveys, presented forums and developed a vision for their youngest citizens. Through the years, a common thread wove through all projects and programs—the need for early childhood mental health education and services. Early childhood mental health is the social and emotional development of young children from birth to kindergarten and their developing ability to express emotions, establish

relationships, learn and thrive. It is the foundation upon which all future development is built.

In a perfect world, all children would have strong, reliable relationships and the ability to learn and develop “normally.” In truth, most children struggle at some point in their young lives. That’s why the ECI communities are now providing parents, teachers and other caregivers with training opportunities that can build the local capacity to serve young children. To learn more, contact Nancy Jost at 800 735-2239.