

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MRES Offers Electric/Plug-in Hybrid Vehicle & Renewable Energy Event in cooperation with U of M Design College -- Open to the Public

MINNEAPOLIS -- On Friday, Oct. 2, in cooperation with the University of Minnesota's College of Design, the Minnesota Renewable Energy Society (MRES) will present the in-depth program, "Electric/Plug-in Hybrid Cars and Renewable Energy: A Critical Marriage."

Starting at 7 p.m. in Ralph Rapson Hall Auditorium at the College of Design on the University of Minnesota's east bank campus, this event will feature a speech by Marc Geller -- co-founder of Plug In America, and a California solar installer -- followed by a panel discussion including Geller, Minnesota State Senator Scott Dibble (District 60 in Minneapolis), Fresh Energy Executive Director Michael Noble, and Eric Jensen, Energy Coordinator for the Isaak Walton League.

The evening will be one of several MRES 30th-Anniversary-Year celebratory events, and will be moderated by author/activist and MRES boardmember Christopher Childs; it will be sponsored by The Electric Vehicle Store, and there will be a display of electric and hybrid vehicles outside Rapson Hall beforehand, starting at 5 p.m. The program will be free and open to the public, though donations will be gratefully accepted.

The speech and panel discussion will address the vital importance of wedding renewable energy (RE) -- especially solar power and wind power -- to an ever-expanding fleet of electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEVs). In order to address climate change, oil-related security issues, the onset of peak oil, fuel-cost issues, and a host of vehicle-based pollution concerns, electricity from renewables now logically becomes the necessary resource to power our cars; the offset to gasoline costs offered by a home solar photovoltaic (PV) system can slash the payback time for PV to as little as five years. MRES' primary mission is public education about, and the promotion of, genuinely renewable energy; the link to clean, all- or partially-electric vehicles is an intimately related topic that is of deep significance both to our members, and to the public at large.

Related issues -- such as the need to pass a low-carbon fuel standard as a major tool to combat global warming -- will also be discussed by the panel; other likely topics include recent advances in solar energy technology (and the current decline in the price of PV panels), and updates on the predicted impact of climate change on Minnesotans under different energy-use scenarios. The evening will close with an audience/panel question-and-answer session. A number of solar and EV/PHEV owners and professionals will also be present, and available to talk briefly with members of the public before and after the event.

The program is scheduled literally and deliberately on the eve of the annual American Solar Energy Society (ASES) Solar Tour, whose Minnesota leg is organized by MRES.

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For those intrigued by the idea of powering their own EV or PHEV with RE -- including RE they produce themselves -- and reducing their vehicle fuel cost for local driving to near-zero, this program will offer the latest information about advances, and likely advances, in both technology and policy... in the apt surroundings of the University of Minnesota's primary location for promoting creativity in design.

Ralph Rapson Hall is at 89 Church St. SE in Minneapolis (Church St. is easily accessible from SE 4th St. or SE University Ave.) on the University of Minnesota's east bank campus; parking is available in several nearby U of M ramps including the Church St. ramp at 80 Church St. SE, across from Rapson Hall (a map of the location is available online at: www1.umn.edu/twincities/maps/RapsonH).

The Minnesota Renewable Energy Society (MRES) is a member-run, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in Minneapolis in 1978 to promote the use of, and to engage in advocacy for, renewable energies in Minnesota through education and through the demonstration of practical applications. MRES is involved in education, awareness, and advocacy efforts for all forms of renewable energy, with a particular emphasis on solar technologies. The mission of MRES is to advance a sustainable society and a renewable energy economy through education, leadership, and example. The organization has a vision to be a key catalyst in advancing solar energy and in transforming Minnesota's energy landscape to embrace efficiency and sustainability. For more information, visit: www.mnRenewables.org and www.mnSolarTour.org.

Note to media: The MRES Solar Trailer will have solar generated electric power available at the event site for media equipment use.

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Speaker Biographies

Marc Geller, Plug In America

Marc Geller is an advocate and writer in the area of public and corporate policy related to electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids, and related source energy. He is on the board of directors of the Electric Auto Association and co-founded the association's San Francisco chapter, the San Francisco Electric Vehicle Association, as well as DontCrush.com and Plug In America. He blogs at plugsandcars.blogspot.com. He is the San Francisco Bay Area sales representative of Energy Efficiency Solar, an installer of solar photovoltaic systems for residences and businesses. For more information go to: www.pluginamerica.org

Michael Noble, Executive Director, Fresh Energy

Michael Noble has been the Executive Director of Fresh Energy since 1995. Michael concentrates on building constituencies and developing policies for a new energy system. He has nearly thirty years of professional expertise in energy, and has been a key strategist for major public policy innovations in energy, such as energy efficiency, renewable energy development, global warming solutions, and strategies to reduce reliance on foreign oil in Minnesota and the Midwestern region. Michael has served as the CEO of three different not-for-profit energy organizations since 1979 and one for-profit energy services company. Passion for progress is what drew Michael into Fresh Energy; he wanted to work full time on changing the rules of the game, so that cleaner and smarter energy choices could flourish. Michael loves to show off his carpentry skills and "green building" ideas in the restoration of his 1910 Craftsman home in St. Paul's Mac-Groveland neighborhood. Michael graduated from Carleton College cum laude with a BA in History. Currently, he is the chair of the Clean Energy Working Group and serves on the Steering Committee of RE-AMP. In addition, Michael serves on the board of directors of Conservation Minnesota Voter Center, Wind on the Wires, and the Will Steger Foundation. For more information go to: www.fresh-energy.org

Christopher Childs, MRES Board Member, Advocacy Committee Chair

Christopher Childs is a Board member and the Advocacy Committee Chair for the Minnesota Renewable Energy Society (MRES). He is a writer and longtime energy and environmental activist. He is the former National Speaker for Greenpeace USA, and is the author of *The Spirit's Terrain: Creativity, Activism, and Transformation*. He has served as Conservation Chair, and as Chair of the Clean Air and Renewable Energy Committee, for the Sierra Club's North Star Chapter. Christopher created Sierra's 2004 and 2006 "Walk for Wind," which promoted wind power across Minnesota. He is currently working on a book about his years with Greenpeace. His 1911 home on St. Paul's West Side — site #2 on the 2007 and 2008 Minnesota Solar Tours — features a 3 kW solar PV system that generates power equivalent to annual household usage. E-mail: christopherc@mnRenewables.org For more information: www.mnRenewables.org

Minnesota Senator D. Scott Dibble

Senator D. Scott Dibble first became involved in politics in the mid-1980's working on issues concerning the civil rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) communities including HIV/AIDS. His involvement led to organizing on issues of social and economic justice—especially in the areas of neighborhood livability, transportation, housing, energy and the environment.

Senator Dibble has played a key role in a number of legislative successes. They include passage of an historic transportation funding measure, enactment of the Freedom to Breathe Act (ensuring clean indoor air for all workers), approval of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, and stopping the so-called “Defense of Marriage Amendment” to the state’s constitution. As the Chair of the Senate’s Transit Subdivision, Senator Dibble played a pivotal role in the override of Governor Pawlenty’s veto of a vital transportation improvement bill that will allow the Twin Cities to build a transit system for the 21st century. He was also asked to serve on a special investigative committee that looked into the tragic collapse of the I-35W Bridge. Senator Dibble continues to be a leader in the Minnesota Senate on legislation relating to transportation and transit, energy efficiency, the environment, housing and economic development.

Senator Dibble has helped position Minnesota as a leader among the states that are working to solve critical clean air, global warming, and economic challenges. Senator Dibble has served as chief author or as a lead negotiator on groundbreaking energy efficiency standards, implementation of a nation-leading renewable energy standard, establishment of a carbon dioxide reduction mandate, instituting the nation’s most stringent mercury emission reduction requirements for coal-fired energy, the first legislation in the country on hybrid plug in electric cars, programs to aid the construction of green buildings and to assist local governments in building more energy efficient facilities. Senator Dibble helped author and served on the state’s Green Jobs Task Force charged with developing a comprehensive economic development policy charged with shaping Minnesota’s participation in the Green Economy for generations to come.

Standing Senate Committees: Taxes Committee, Transportation Committee (Chair, Transit Subdivision), Economic Development Budget Division, Environment and Natural Resources Committee, and the Energy, Utilities, Technology and Communications Committee.

National Committees: Chair of the National Conference of State Legislature’s Transportation Committee

Education and training: Apple Valley High School. University of Minnesota (Political Science). University of St. Thomas (German & Political Science), Policy Fellow-University of Minnesota Humphrey Institute, Fleming Fellow-Center for Policy Alternatives, Bowhay Institute for Leadership Development-Council of State Governments.

More information: www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/members/member_bio.php?leg_id=10142

Eric Jensen, Energy Coordinator, Izaak Walton League

Eric Jensen is the Energy Coordinator for the Izaak Walton League of America. In his position, he is involved in reviewing utility resource plans and rate designs and is active in the League's focus on distributed generation, Low Carbon Fuel policy, the Midwest Renewable Energy Tracking System, utility revenue decoupling, and wind energy siting and wildlife interaction. Eric supports and is actively involved in numerous organizations, non-profits, and programs including renewable fuels work with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, development for the Experimental College of the Twin Cities, as a member of the steering committee for Studio Bricolage (a community-driven art, craft and technology center), and as part of the events committee for MRES. He has previously worked as a process engineer for Flint Hills Resources before focusing more closely on renewable energy and conservation as a technical assistant for Hennepin County briefly before his current position. Eric holds a degree in Chemical Engineering from UW-Madison. For more information, go to www.iwla.org or learn more about local IWLA chapters at www.minnesotaiikes.org

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