

Ethical Energy

Wisconsin Interfaith Climate & Energy Campaign

WICEC Addresses Governor's Cuts to Public Benefits:

On March 20, 2003 Rev. Dave Steffenson (United Methodist) and WICEC staff coordinator Kim Herb (Jewish) met with Governor Doyle's environmental policy advisor, Harald Jordahl, aka "Jordy," to discuss the dramatic cuts to the public benefits fund in the new budget.

WICEC understands that fulfilling the campaign pledge of addressing the budget deficit without raising taxes is priority #1 for the new administration. However, the Public Benefits Fund is a rate-payer-funded contract with the state of Wis-

consin to provide energy efficiency and reduce state electricity demands. Raiding this fund amounts to a tax increase buried in all state utility bills. WICEC is asking the governor to protect Public Benefits for their intended uses. Furthermore, WICEC will ask that the Focus on Energy program of the Department of the Administration be strengthened and supported in providing direct energy-saving programs. Firstly, an annual energy savings target harvested by these funds needs to be set. An annual \$50 mil-

lion program should be able to harvest at least 100 MW in energy savings, according to studies done in Wisconsin and other states. Secondly, while we commend Focus on Energy for its increasing services to aid citizens in reducing their energy use in businesses and public buildings (including religious facilities), we urge them to continue reducing their overhead costs for promotion and administration thus returning money back to ratepayers as installed measure incentives. WICEC suggests this can be accom-

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Look for us at these upcoming events

- April 26th Earth Day fair in Evansville.
- May 3rd Farmers Market on the Square in Madison
- June 20th-22 Midwest Renewable Energy Association Fair in Custer

The Price of Power: Wisconsin's Ties to Environmental and Cultural Devastation in Canada

While many of us are familiar with the Arrowhead-Weston transmission line project, the extent of potential environmental and cultural impacts of the project are not as well known. If built, the proposed 250 mile long, 345 kv line may have more impacts than we realize.

The Arrowhead-Weston transmission line would bring cheap, hydroelectric power from Canada. Manitoba Hydro, a "crown" corporation, has already contracted with Wisconsin utilities. While some feel that hydropower is a clean, safe energy source, Native Americans in Cross Lake, Manitoba have had a very different experience.

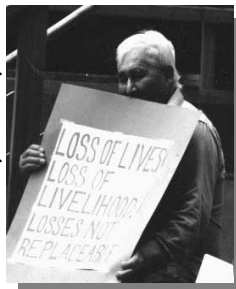
Hydro dams on the Nel-

son-Churchill River system in Manitoba have completely altered the environment. The fishing economy, river safety, wildlife patterns and traditional ways of life have all been devastated.

All in all, an area about the size of the state of Minnesota is now underwater as a result of these dams. Impacts include devastation of water quality and clarity, greatly fluctuating water levels, and shorelines eroding 3 meters per year.

Not only do massive hydro projects like this cause local environmental devastation, but large hydro dams contribute to global warming. These reser-

voirs created by hydro dams produce carbon dioxide and methane from rotting vegetation. Methane is 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a global warming gas.



Member of Cree Nation protesting Manitoba Hydro

This has had a very devastating effect on the Cree people. The Pimicikamac Cree, who live in Cross Lake, are cut off from their traditional hunting and gathering lifestyle, and forced to live side by side with this environmental disaster. This has caused

great depression and sadness among the Pimicikamac Cree.

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Recognizing the Work of the WICEC:

On March 26, 2003, Rev. Dave Steffenson received Madison's mayoral "Climate Protection Award" for his work with the Wisconsin Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign. We are grateful for his work and very pleased that he remains heavily involved with the WICEC as Education and Outreach Coordinator.



From left to right Madison Mayor Sue Bauman, Joe Bachman, Wayne Stroessner and Rev. Dave Steffenson

WICEC to Endorse the West Campus Cogeneration Facility By Kim Herb

MADISON The WICEC steering committee recently decided to support Madison Gas and Electric's proposed West Campus Cogeneration facility (WCCF). After three months of careful consideration and a meeting at MG&E with Senior Vice-President, Lynn Hobbie, Community Services Manager Bob Stoffs, and Engineer Tim Bliefernicht, we agreed to enthusiastically support the plant for the numerous reasons.

As a grassroots movement originally created to move Wisconsin to meet and exceed standards laid out in the UN's 1997 Kyoto Protocol by 2010, we recognize that we cannot allow the construction of any more coal plants in Wisconsin. Coal plants are the single largest contributor of green house gases, as well

as a number of toxins. The Nitrogen Oxide emissions from the proposed cogeneration plant would be 80% less than that of separate stand-alone electricity and heating facilities. Carbon Dioxide emissions would be reduced by approximately 15% a year. In addition, the facility will operate with a net efficiency of up to 70% compared to 30% - 35% efficiency of a typical electric facility.

MG&E has demonstrated creative and respectful consideration of the health and sustainability of the surrounding neighborhood with respect to the impact of noise, lighting and emissions.

In addition the WCCF would lessen Madison's dependence on 'imported' electricity. "...[We] believe that a cleaner, new gas plant is a

wise move for any large city, especially one like Madison that imports so much of its electricity." Says Rich Bog-



Proposed West Campus Cogeneration Facility

vich of WICEC and Wisconsin's Environmental Decade. Such a facility could lessen from Madison's conscience the impact of future coal plants such as the Oak Creek coal plant, on its downwind

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Price of Power cont'd

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Manitoba Hydro is looking to Wisconsin to transport their electricity to markets in Chicago and St. Louis. Half a dozen new dams have been proposed in Canada; these dams are proposed on the speculation that the Arrowhead-Weston line will be built. Manitoba Hydro has been extremely hostile to Native American resistance to these plans, as well as American inquiry into the environmental and human rights impacts of these hydro dams.

An alternative transmission line route supported by Wisconsin's Environmental

Decade and others could actually bring more truly renewable energy into Wisconsin. This alternative route (the "King-Weston" route) would connect Wisconsin more closely to wind power in Minnesota and the Dakotas.

By Claire Schmidt, Wisconsin's Environmental Decade (608) 251-7020 schmidtc@chorus.net.

WICEC Address cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

plished by adding two simple measures: 1) a 50% rebate on energy efficiency and renewable energy systems, and 2) providing 0% interest loans. Furthermore, Focus on Energy funds must be distributed justly and without bias toward large businesses.

Horse and Buggy Days By Wayne Stroessner

A little more than 100 years ago, we used horse-and-buggy for transportation. At the same time, a new mode of transportation was challenging the horse-and-buggy. During that period, there was no infrastructure for these newer vehicles - no refueling stations, no decent highways, and no Mr. Goodwrench mechanics. Today, we have a similar situation with the burgeoning hydrogen economy. When hydrogen burns, it produces both heat and water. If hydrogen is fed into a fuel cell, it produces electricity, heat, and pure drinkable water. No pollution! There are dozens of ways to produce hydrogen that do not require any fossil fuels including using wind turbines or photovoltaic cells. This hydrogen can be stored in large pressurized tanks or the hydrogen could be piped to refueling stations for hydrogen fuel

cell automobiles, or it could be piped to our own homes where we could use a fuel cell to produce all of the electricity and heat for the home. University of Madison researchers have discovered how to produce what could be an unlimited and clean hydrogen source from plants. The process is efficient and inexpensive. Penn State found bacteria that can convert wastewater from food production companies to create hydrogen gas. Technology for securing hydrogen with fossil fuels, most notably natural gas, has also been developed. Nay sayers and skeptics of developing hydrogen technology are missing an important point the future is already here; the hydrogen economy is already underway. The task at hand is developing the infrastructure to support it.

Nay sayers and skeptics are missing an important point: the hydrogen economy is already underway.



Xcellsis Fuel Cell Bus

\$27M of Public Benefits Fund at Risk

March 26, 2003 was a busy day for the WICEC. Rich Bogovich of Wisconsin's Environmental Decade (Catholic) and WICEC staff coordinator Kim Herb (Jewish) gave testimony before the Wisconsin Senate Committee on Energy and Utilities, presenting our views on budgetary cuts to the Public Benefits fund.

Along with businesspersons and other environmentalists, the WICEC voiced support for the Focus on Energy Program. WICEC is critical of the Focus on Energy program for disproportionate spending on advertising and

administrative costs, bureaucratic obstacles to utilization by small businesses and institutions, and citizens, a very weak renewables emphasis, and an undue fiscal bias for large businesses.

Focus has facilitated the reduction of green house gases and other air pollutants by millions of pounds. In only two years, Focus has demonstrated its effectiveness over similar programs administered by the utility companies and operated a budget similar to programs in other states. Therefore, while we demand reformation in the Focus program, we recognize

the vital role it plays in the administration of Public Benefits funds and reducing Wisconsin's contributions to climate change. In April, the WICEC will give testimony at the Joint Finance Committee hearings in Milwaukee and Madison to the same end. The Governor's proposed cuts would take \$27 million away from the program. Besides seriously affecting Focus on Energy, the concern is that eventually the public benefits fund, so vital to the state's economy and environment, would be phased out altogether. WICEC will fight this all the way.



Rich Bogovich testifying before the Senate Committee on Energy and Utilities on March 26.



New WICEC Staff Coordinators
Kim (above) and Chris Herb

“...it makes sense that the most dynamic leaders of the environmental movement are those who trust in miracles.”

New Staff Coordinators

As of February 1, 2003 the WICEC has two new staff coordinators: Kim and Chris Herb.

Chris Herb attended the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado and is currently writing his thesis on eco-Judaism. Prior to going back to school, he worked with the Biodiversity Project in Madison and the Wisconsin Assisted Living Association. Currently a commercial beekeeper in Mt. Horeb he also coordinates the Madison Area Jewish Environmentalists (MAJE). In 2001, after six years of ardently studying the faith, he converted to Judaism with Conservative rabbis in

Denver.

Kim Herb (Jewish) earned a BA in Philosophy and the History of Mathematics from St. John’s College in Santa Fe, NM where she focused on Process Studies. She has worked for the Wisconsin Council of Developmental Disabilities in Madison and Meurer & Associates, a consulting engineering firm in Denver. She is currently working part-time as the coordinator for the Faith Inclusion Network (F.I.N.), a group of Madison area congregations, people with disabilities and their advocates assisting faith communities to welcome, include, and empower people

with disabilities. She recently concluded work with Informing Ecological Design, LLC where she acted as writer and consultant for SenseDat Software: software designed to facilitate the understanding of energy use. She will be attending UW Madison in the fall of 2003 at the LaFollette School of Public Affairs where she will specialize in Energy Analysis and Policy.

Rev. Dave Steffenson, former staff coordinator, has assumed the post of Education and Outreach Coordinator and continues to serve on the WICEC steering committee.

National Campaign Appears in Scientific Journal

February 2003, an article appeared in the journal Ecological Society of America celebrating faith based environmental initiatives. It focused specifically on the national interfaith climate and energy campaign. The following are excerpts from this wonderful article.

“At this unsettling juncture of our sojourn as a species – when we’ve found out that our impact on Earth is enough to change even the climate, yet when we still have no serious plan to start turning things

around – it makes total sense that the most dynamic leaders of the environmental movement are those who trust in miracles. Not the folks who send you the tote bags or the glossy calendars with requests for donations each year but the ones who, whether they’re

churchgoing or not, share a basic belief that people can rise above immediate self-interest...[Religious leaders, i. e. of the Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign] recognize that anthropogenic climate change is probably the greatest moral challenge our species has faced. Ultimately, the real test of our mettle will be whether we can lift ourselves out of inertia and denial in time to transform our economy, and maybe even our consumerist culture, for the sake of other species, faraway islanders and people yet unborn...[G]entle, non-partisan arguments can help persuade Americans to begin to consider their obligation to provide ‘natural security’ for future generations... [We] now need to count on the Quixotes and the faithful as we never have before. The more we suspend disbelief and act as

if unity and common sense are possible, when it comes to fighting for our air, water and climate, the less worthy of ridicule that goal will seem. More and more these days, I hear environmental scientists using the word ‘threshold’ – implying a breakthrough point at which all the disparate forces building up on college campuses, in city halls, and in churches and synagogues, will tip the scales in favor of a turnaround from our seemingly suicidal current course. It may take, in the words of singer Lou Reed, ‘a busload of faith’ to believe that day will come in time to save us.”

“A Question of Faith” By Katherine Ellison

Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment, 2003. Vol. 1, Iss. 1, 56.

West Campus Cogeneration Facility cont'd

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community.

Opponents in the Regent neighborhood in which the plant would be constructed oppose the facility because of its size and worst-case scenario emissions that would impact a neighborhood whose air pollution levels are already near Environmental Protection Agency limits due to local traffic. Nonetheless, emissions during a worst-case scenario are just that, worst-case scenarios, which MG&E officials stated could not be sustained for more than three days and do not represent nor-

mal operating emissions.

Steps must be taken to reduce Madison's total emissions. The West Campus Cogeneration Facility is one of these steps by allowing for the possible future closure of the existing Blount Street coal plant or its conversion to a gas fired cogeneration facility while at the same time actively moving the city to cleaner electricity production. Steps must also be taken to protect the health and livelihood of those people who happen to live downwind of the coal plants that supply Madison with its electricity.

Bob Stoffs of MG&E says "We are confident that this is the best available solution to meet our obligation to provide energy for the community that is reliable, cost-effective and environmentally friendly". WICEC agrees.

For history and details visit <http://www.news.wisc.edu/releases/view.html?id=8457&month=Mar&year=2003>

For more information about the facility visit <http://www.mge.com/community/cogen/index.htm>


Wisconsin Interfaith Climate & Energy Campaign

Look for details and registration information in the mail this summer

WICEC Annual Conference

Tuesday August 12th & Wednesday August 13th

At Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, Wisconsin



If you know someone else who might be interested please invite them to drop us a note.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____



WICEC CONTRIBUTION FORM

The WICEC (formerly the Wisconsin Interfaith Climate Change Campaign, WICCC) is one of more than 20 state campaigns of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE). Our aim is to inform, train, and activate religious congregations of all faiths to take concrete steps to reduce global warming and work toward a sustainable future out of a faith-based value orientation. It is the belief of all involved that our religious faiths can ethically inform a sustainable future and that inter-religious projects foster healthy, sustainable and secure communities by fostering creative relationships between diverse people.

The Wisconsin Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign is a division of Wisconsin Interfaith IMPACT a 501 (c)(3) non-profit. As such contributions made to WICEC are not only greatly appreciated but also tax-deductible.

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 indicating WICEC in the memo, and send to:
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 16 N. Carroll St., Ste. 800
 Madison, WI 53703



We've changed our name. Formerly known as the Wisconsin Interfaith Climate Change Campaign (WICCC), we have decided to change our name not because the acronym was tough to say but to be consistent with a name change that took place on the national level.

The national campaign was renamed the Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign and the Wisconsin chapter has followed suit. We are now the Wisconsin Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign (WICEC).



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People of many faiths
seeking to move the care of Creation
to the forefront of Wisconsin faith communities

