

Building Up



Building your business on energy efficiency

A message from ...

the Power of One®
Energy Conservation Team

We often hear from speakers and presenters at the annual Energy Design Conference & Expo in Duluth that Minnesota contractors are ahead of their peers in energy-efficient sustainable design and construction. Home construction professionals in our area seem eager to understand and proud to implement cutting-edge technologies, principles and practices that improve the energy efficiency, comfort and durability of new and existing homes.

Here at Minnesota Power, we are proud to play a part in advancing the home construction industry through educational events like the Energy Design Conference & Expo and by requiring that contractors who participate in our conservation rebate programs are program and product trained to ensure quality installations. In this issue, you will read about a recent HVAC training session that drew dozens of attendees, strengthening and expanding our network of participating contractors. You also will learn about Minnesota Power's first community solar garden, the latest addition to our growing options for customers who want solar power.

Thank you for helping to move our region's home construction industry toward a brighter, greener future. Visit www.mnpower.com/energyconservation for tools and resources to build your business on energy efficiency.

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HVAC Training Is Cool for Contractors and Customers

The work day has just started for residential journeyman Carl Vana, and he is at a job site preparing to install an energy-efficient mini-split ductless air source heat pump (ASHP) in an existing home.

Vana has worked in the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) field for 21 years, the past four with Carlson Duluth Company. He recently completed training that puts him in an elite network of participating HVAC contractors whose qualifying installations are eligible for Minnesota Power's Power of One® Home rebates.

The training was sponsored by Minnesota Power and offered as a preconference session of the 2016 Energy Design Conference & Expo in Duluth. Participants learned about a variety of topics. These included ASHP, central air conditioning (CAC) and ground source heat pump (GSHP) quality installations; electronically commutated motor (ECM) replacements; and new Minnesota energy codes.

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**Chad Trebilcock,
Minnesota Power**

"It was very informative," Vana said. "We got great information and training about energy efficiency, sealing and insulation, ductwork, heating lines, code changes and the requirements for Minnesota Power rebate programs."

"HVAC contractor training is part of Minnesota Power's continuing effort

to promote quality installations and a strong contractor network," said Chad Trebilcock, energy efficiency analyst and manager of Minnesota Power's Triple E New Construction program. "Our goal is to provide quality training to those folks who are newer to the industry and also as a refresher to those who have been in the industry for awhile."

Fifty-five contractors attended the training in February, some for the first time and others to retain their program eligibility. The continuing education requirement is key to ensuring quality installations as energy-efficient heating and cooling systems advance and new technologies emerge.

"Technology changes and it is important for professional contractors to continuously refresh their skills so they can educate customers about what is available and how it works," said Christopher Mohalley, training manager, Climate Solutions, Regal Beloit America, Inc., who presented a session on ECM replacements. "We can't expect consumers to spend hundreds of dollars on energy-efficient technology without fully understanding what it does or the value it provides beyond energy savings."

"Customers look to contractors as professionals and rely on the information we provide to make calculated decisions on equipment purchases, repairs and replacements," Vana said. "I have worked in many places served by other utilities, and Minnesota Power is definitely at the top in terms of making sure contractors who deal with their programs know as much as possible."



It goes both ways. Minnesota Power's energy conservation team also relies on the expertise of participating contractors and trainers when developing and fine tuning its HVAC rebate programs. For example, Mohalley, whose 10 years as an HVAC contractor led him to become a trainer, said he provided input on check lists, data sheets and program requirements for what contractors should accomplish on their job sites before submitting paperwork.

Many of those who completed the HVAC training stayed to attend the two-day Energy Design Conference & Expo, which drew several hundred people to learn about energy-efficient building technologies, renewable energy, best practices and responsible design. Minnesota Power has hosted the annual event for more than 25 years with support from key partners and sponsors like the City of Duluth's ComfortSystems natural gas utility.

"I would like to thank Eric Schlacks from ComfortSystems for attending the HVAC training and playing a big role in the Energy Design Conference & Expo," Trebilcock said. "It is unique that we can work hand-in-hand to raise the bar for building professionals and help achieve savings for our shared customers." ■

Solar Garden will Sprout up in Duluth

Here is a seed to plant with your customers who are interested in solar energy but don't have a location conducive to generating electricity from the sun. Minnesota Power is planning to build its first solar garden in 2016. It will allow customers to harvest solar electricity without installing a system at their own home or business. The garden will include two solar arrays: a 40-kilowatt array on the corner of Arrowhead Road and Rice Lake Road in Duluth and a 1-megawatt array on vacant land owned by St. Louis County near the intersection of Haines Road and Arrowhead Road. Minnesota Power customers can "buy a share" of the garden with an upfront payment, fixed monthly subscription fee, or a fixed charge for each kilowatt hour. Hundreds of people are already on an interest list. Visit www.mnpower.com/communitysolar to learn more.

Featured Incentives

Educate your customers about Minnesota Power's conservation incentives and build your business on energy efficiency.

Here are a few of the valuable rebates available through our participating HVAC contractor network:

ENERGY STAR® ASHP: \$300 rebate for proper installation

Combo: ENERGY STAR® ASHP and ECM Fan Motor: \$500 total rebates for proper installation of ENERGY STAR® ASHP with integrated all-season, whole-house applicable ECM fan motor on existing forced air furnace

New Forced Air Furnace with ECM Fan Motor: \$200 rebate

Combo: New Forced Air Furnace with ECM Fan Motor and CAC: \$375 rebate

Combo: New Force Air Furnace with ECM Fan Motor and Properly Installed ENERGY STAR® ASHP: \$600 rebate

Mini-Split Ductless ASHP System: \$500 rebate (NOTE: Electricity must be the existing primary heating source.)

Visit www.mnpower.com/rebates for complete information on rebates and other energy-saving tools to help your customers make effective energy choices and build your business on energy efficiency.

ENERGY DESIGN

conference & expo

Numbers were up, the exhibit hall was full and the DECC was energized during the 2016 Energy Design Conference & Expo. This year's event drew 650 attendees, vendors, exhibitors and presenters—including lots of fresh faces and students interested in learning more about energy-efficient design and construction. Planning is already underway for next year. Contact Amanda Oja at aoja@mnpower.com if you have ideas for topics or presenters!

