The EDC celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2015. Many partners have joined Minnesota Power over the years in growing the conference into a “must-attend” event for residential and commercial construction professionals, from builders and contractors to architects, engineers and vendors. Homeowners, property managers, students and others also find it valuable for the latest in high performance design and construction.

Designing and building homes and businesses that are energy efficient, durable and comfortable is an evolving science. One building scientist on the cutting edge of research, theory and practice is Patrick Huelman, associate extension professor and cold climate housing coordinator, University of Minnesota. Huelman helped plan the very first EDC 25 years ago and has remained a valuable partner and popular presenter.

“I have missed a few years, but not very many,” Huelman said. “This conference quickly became recognized as a premiere event for the latest and greatest in energy efficiency, building science and high performance construction—plus it is very open, inclusive and practical.”

Huelman credits the EDC with advancing high performance technologies and building practices throughout the region.

“Practices here are well above average, and I’m convinced that events such as the EDC are instrumental,” Huelman said. “The conference is focused on relevant content and helping people learn what works and what doesn’t work in the field.”

This year, Huelman will lead sessions on building science and on preparing for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Zero Energy Ready Home. He will bring part of an award-winning, student-designed Zero Energy Home model that was built for a national competition and featured at the 2014 Minnesota State Fair.

Architect Rachel Wagner attended her first Energy Design Conference & Expo (EDC) in 1997. Since then, she has not missed one single year. Wagner is...
a principal in Duluth-based Wagner Zaun Architecture and an expert in low-energy, integrated residential design. For the past 10 years, she has shared that expertise as a member of the EDC sessions planning team, working to ensure a powerful, relevant and meaningful lineup of topics and presenters.

“I think the conference consistently delivers a quality and level of education about energy efficiency and building science that builders can incorporate into their work immediately,” Wagner said. “People come back because attention is paid to provide both a solid, basic education plus layers of advanced learning for those who have mastered the basics.”

Looking toward the next 25 years, Wagner hopes to see even stronger partnerships between utilities, educational institutions, governments and practitioners to advance sustainable construction.

“Our region is doing exceptional work, especially in residential building in cold climates, but it is important that we don’t get complacent,” she said. “There is always room for improvement, and this conference is one way to combine efforts and improve the way we build.”

Amanda Oja
Energy Efficiency Analyst II
Minnesota Power

Solar Will Shine Before, During and After the EDC

If you are interested in solar photovoltaic (PV) technology and what it takes to become an installer, plan to attend a special preconference session, Monday, February 23, provided by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association. There also will be a solar-themed track during the regular conference. It will include sessions on solar energy basics, building solar-ready homes, PV design, solar codes, and selling solar in the current market.

“The Energy Design Conference & Expo is a great place for us to reach out to contractors who are thinking about getting into solar installations,” said Paul Helstrom, renewable program lead, Minnesota Power. “Solar energy is about to take off in Minnesota. If contractors recognize the opportunities and get the proper training, they will be ready when the market hits.”

Rashkin to Keynote EDC and Lead Preconference Session on Building Science

How far have we come in building science? Where are we today? What does the future hold? Learn the answers from Sam Rashkin, Chief Architect of the Building Technologies Office in the U. S. Energy Department’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Rashkin will present a keynote address during the Energy Design Conference & Expo and lead a preconference session Monday, February 23. Don’t miss this opportunity to learn from one of the country’s leading experts in building science!