

2008 Michigan Energy Fair: Year of Firsts

Onkama, MI (June 27-29, 2008) – Michigan Energy Fair had a record breaking 3rd year. Attendance skyrocketed to over 6,000 attendees during the weekend event. Governor Jennifer Granholm kicked off the Fair and welcomed a crowd of over 1,000 as she pressed the vital and urgent need of renewable energy use in Michigan. Governor Granholm recognized Adam Bearup of Hybrid homes and Onkama Township Supervisor, David Meister, for being leaders in the field of sustainable energy. “The Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association (GLREA) is very pleased that Governor Granholm was able kick-off this year’s Michigan Energy Fair”, said Jennifer Alvarado, GLREA Executive Director. “Her commitment to renewable energy is key to the growth of the industry in Michigan.”

The Michigan Energy Fair is the largest event in Michigan that is specifically related to energy education of residents and business owners and providing over 100 renewable energy and energy efficiency vendors. “Our goal is to offer Michigan residents educational information on how to build or improve the efficiency of your home and business through our workshops. Then, you can walk right over to the companies that sell the products. This is not only an educational event but a place to engage the consumer with the companies in the sustainable energy field,” stated Jennifer Alvarado. Adam Bearup, of Hybrid Homes, has already followed up with a lead from the event that has turned into a build job. “My business comes from education and enlightenment about designing green homes,” stated Mr. Bearup. “Being a member of GLREA was the best way for me to get into the field and the Michigan Energy Fair is an unique opportunity for me to show off our product to interested consumers.

Participation by exhibitors also increased from last year’s Fair. Over 120 exhibitors demonstrated their products and services at the Fair. Over seventy workshops were offered this year on a wide variety of topics, including green building, financing of renewable energy projects, energy efficiency, sustainable living and much more. Several educational tours were offered throughout the weekend as well, most of which sold out. Attendees enjoyed the renewable energy home tour, which visited several home and business sites in Northwestern Michigan. Tours were also offered of Hybrid Homes new build in Onkama, a home currently undergoing review for LEED-H Platinum designation – the first of its kind in Michigan. Transportation for these tours was provided courtesy of the Bay Area Transportation Authority (BATA). BATA provided a 27 foot low-emission hybrid-electric bus for the Hybrid Home tour, a specialized bus that runs on biodiesel when in hybrid mode.

Power supply to the stage in the Kid’s Tent and Entertainment area was provided by the solar panels of Northwestern Michigan College, which generated power throughout the day – storing it in a battery system in their renewable energy trailer. The Fair then tapped into this power system for its electrical needs exhibiting the sustainability of the Fair itself.

Keynotes were delivered Saturday night by Dr. Richard Blieden and David Konkle, of the Ann Arbor Energy Office. Dr. Blieden focused on the solutions to the state and National energy needs that solar energy can provide. The cost of solar electricity is expected to decrease over the next few years as coal delivered electricity will increase and include carbon emission costs. David Konkle highlighted the success of the city of Ann Arbor has demonstrated in cutting their energy costs from implementing LED street lighting, increasing efficiency use in vehicles and actively pursuing solar and wind energy.

The Michigan Energy Fair, held at the Manistee County Fairgrounds, was a huge success, educating over 6000 people on issues such as energy efficiency, bio-fuels, renewable energy technologies like solar and wind power, and techniques for living sustainably on our earth. Saturday was Kids' Day and featured renewable energy activities on-site. The Michigan Energy Fair is organized by the GLREA. The event receives tremendous volunteer support with over 100 people volunteering this year.