

# WEST ENERGY NEWS

April 2009

"to educate and advocate for a clean, sustainable energy future  
for the Macatawa area" [www.westmichiganenergy.org](http://www.westmichiganenergy.org)

## New Solar Vision: Chemist Harry Gray!

"The energy of sunlight hitting the Earth in one hour is enough to meet one year of the planet's current energy consumption," said award-winning chemist Harry Gray, opening his April 2 Hope College lecture. "We just have to figure out how to convert it to renewable energy!"

Gray sees a future with solar-energy absorbing paint on your home and solar carpets on your garage roof to power your car. Most of all, he's talking up solar-powered water-splitting devices that could convert plentiful planetary sea-water into hydrogen fuel and oxygen.

It's 21<sup>st</sup> century science--this generation's equivalent to sending a man to the moon. Gray is a principal investigator at the Powering the Planet Center for Chemical Innovation at California's Institute for Technology. He's got a team of co-investigators at the Center and is working up a 'Solar Army' of young people in colleges and high schools across the country to help with computer scanning of the billions of metallic combinations that might make the solar conversion work.

"In five years, we'll have a prototype," Gray projects. His team will then aim at raising efficiency before 2060, the point when humans need to have cut their CO-2 production by 80%. When it happens, "we'll see a boom in solar architecture," Gray predicts. It will take cleaning workers to keep the surfaces clear, manufacturers and installers. For technical detail on the project, go to <http://nrg.caltech.edu> and click on the PDF file for Harry Gray's lecture.



## HOLLAND FILES 'Way Above Minimum' RENEWABLES PLAN

Meeting an April 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline for the Michigan Public Service Commission, Holland's BPW will have four renewable-energy sources by the end of 2009. It will buy 8,700 mw hours yearly from the Graying biomass power plant and 520 kw hours from the Granger Landfill (methane) Project. A Civic Center turbine is expected to produce 5.3 mw hours per year and 2.6 mw hours will come from a turbine at the HBPW service center.

Four larger wind energy sources may be added before 2014. HBPW plans to buy wind energy from Wyandotte turbines, projected for 2011, with potential of 5.5 MW capacity. A 4.9mw Windmill Island Project with 1 to 3 turbines producing 4.95 MW (11,274 mw hours yearly), could be on line in 2011. The UP Stone Mountain Wind Project, with 20 to 25 turbines, could generate 41.25 MW (90,338 mw yearly) by 2013. The utility also may install 2-3 wind turbines south of Muskegon in late 2010, providing 3.2 MW (8,672 mw hours yearly).

This plan exceeds the 10% renewables portfolio now required by state law. Holland's BPW expects to have renewable energy credits (RECs) to sell starting in 2012 and continuing over the next 20 years. Funds will provide city income and reduce overall power supply costs, says HBPW. No new 'renewables' fees are expected now. Still unclear: will the renewables plan lower the size of the projected 78MW power plant? Find details online at: [www.hollandbpw.com](http://www.hollandbpw.com)

## New Sustainability Committee Meets

Holland's newest citizen committee has an initial meeting in March. Next meeting scheduled for April 20, 5pm at City Hall, and every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday thereafter.

The committee advises City Council and the Board of Public Works on 'Green' issues, including energy. Meetings are open to the public, with participation at specified times. Meetings should be posted at: [www.cityofholland.com](http://www.cityofholland.com).



## Energy Week: New Faces and Voices!

From the opening parade, preceded by Green Crafts and followed by film and exhibits at the Knickerbocker; on through League of Women Voter's gathering of reports on green energy work, Holland Christian's renewable energy exhibits and debate on coal and a 3-Es film; to the lively book discussion (and tours) at CityFlats, Creation Care lecture and workshop and the Friday night moment of reflection on energy ethics--the chock-full week of events brought in new participants and outreach. Many kudos to Marty Dugan, event coordinator, and to all participating groups and members!

## Green Spring Shorts

**2nd Annual Michigan Energy Conference, April 16-17. Ferris State University, Big Rapids.** Workshops include energy auditing for business owners, becoming a home energy rater, and understanding alternative fuels for transportation. Stephen Hamstra from Holland's GMB Architects will discuss reducing carbon footprint on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Go to [www.ferris.edu/energy/register-2009.htm](http://www.ferris.edu/energy/register-2009.htm) for information. Some free events.

**An April 1<sup>st</sup> report on the financial performance of 'green', LEED-certified, office buildings in the U.S.** found that a 10-percent decrease in energy consumption leads to a 2% increase in property value. The report, "Doing Well by Doing Good," published by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (**RICS**) is available at: [www.rics.org](http://www.rics.org).

**Green Drinks, an international networking group, now meets in Holland at CityFlats Hotel.** Environment, architecture, and social causes are topics open for casual discussion from 5:30 to 8:00 pm on the first Thursday of each month. Find upcoming events for Green Drinks Holland at [www.greendrinksholland.org](http://www.greendrinksholland.org).

April 24<sup>th</sup>, 4-5:30pm: Dr Thomas E Lovejoy presents "*Climate Change: Prospects for Nature*". Lovejoy is biodiversity chair of the Heinz Center for Science, Economics and the Environment. At Aquinas College Performing Arts Center, 1702 Robinson Rd., SE, Grand Rapids.

**Tues., April 21, 7 p.m., Sr. Sharon Zayak. "Climate Change -- a Faith Perspective"** Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Meeting Rooms A/B, 480 152nd Ave, Holland, MI 49424.

**IBOG, a new company based in San Francisco, is promoting discounted group-purchases of solar-power systems** in California, New Orleans, Denver and Phoenix. It's Goal: promoting the idea of community-buying clubs of energy-saving products. For more: <http://1bog.org>.



**"The fallacy that more economic growth can lead to improved human welfare underpins the global financial crisis. We need to move beyond 'growth at all costs' and reorganize the economy based on the quality of life rather than quantity of consumption"**

**--Robert Costanza, Ecological Economist**

## WEST says YES to:

**-Renewable Energy  
-Energy Conservation  
-Energy Efficiency  
-Significant Lowering of all  
Pollution for Energy Production  
-Making a Difference in our  
Community,  
with Seven Future Generations  
in Mind**

WEST meets on the  
first Tuesday of each month  
8 - 9:30 a.m. Check place at  
[www.westmichiganenergy.org](http://www.westmichiganenergy.org)

Co-chairs

Chris Byrnes & Dave Trudell  
Committees

Policy: Mark Rich

Education: Don Triezenberg

Research: David Trudell

John Fulenwider

Energy Week: Marty Dugan

Newsletter: Sara Leeland

[saraleeland@sbcglobal.net](mailto:saraleeland@sbcglobal.net)



## Climate Change Update

"The massive amounts of carbon dioxide belched from chimneys and exhausts that dissolve in the ocean are creating unprecedented ...levels of ocean acidification", says a new study by scientists at Bristol University.

Oceans have acted to lower the impact of climate change by absorbing nearly one-half of CO-2 emitted worldwide. But acidification of water now threatens coral reefs and marine calcifiers.

Also, warming waters will not absorb as much CO-2, leading to further atmospheric heating, says a BBC report.

--Reported by *UKGuardian* & BBC 3/10/09.