

Storm Warnings: Best Practices provides timely information, trends and ideas that relate to the looming storm and impact on our lives.

BEST PRACTICES

“Practical solutions for challenging times”

Issue 2, 2014

Demand reduction and energy conservation

Best practices Award: Weathering the Storm periodically recognizes organizations providing practical, effective and quantifiable solutions for addressing the challenges of the perfect storm. It is a privilege to present the Great Plains Institute, GPI, as the *Best Practices Award* recipient for its outstanding work in bringing together diverse factions to formulate effective clean energy policies. Please read on and see why.



**GREAT PLAINS
INSTITUTE**

Mission or vision: GPI's mission is to transform the way we produce, distribute and use energy to be both economically and environmentally sustainable.

Organization: The Great Plains Institute for Sustainable Development, Inc. (a.k.a., Great Plains Institute) was founded in 1997 to promote the economic, environmental and social well-being of the vast Great Plains region of the United States. Today, GPI focuses exclusively on transforming the way we produce, distribute, and consume energy to be both environmentally and economically sustainable as a prerequisite to lasting progress and a better world.

The Great Plains Institute is a non-partisan, 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit organization that uses consensus-based strategies to discover and implement politically durable solutions to society's most pressing energy and climate challenges. While still based in Minneapolis, and with a core competency in the Midwest, GPI's work now ranges from municipal-scale to state, national and international. We maintain foreign incorporations in Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

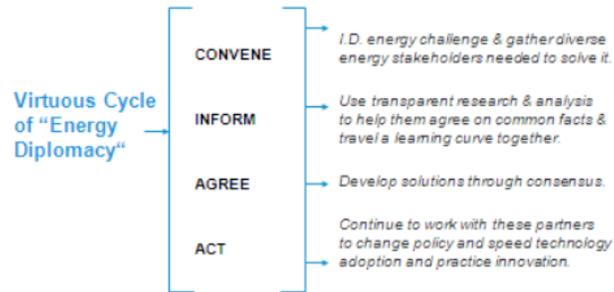
How It works: The Great Plains Institute does three main things. We:

1. Develop better energy policy using well-honed consensus-based methods.
2. Catalyze the adoption of the best energy technologies, practices & programs.
3. Provide reliable analysis & decision tools to leaders in the public and private sector.

GPI's unique approach to developing better energy

policy is to identify difficult energy issues, bring together the key interests who need to be a part of solving those issues, metaphorically lock them in a room together and create a safe "container" within which they can travel a shared learning curve and develop novel solutions that no one interest would likely come to on their own. Then we work with those same interests and others to get the resulting consensus ideas put into practice.

GPI'S CONSENSUS-BASED APPROACH TO SOLVING ENERGY PROBLEMS



Our work spans seven programmatic areas, including: energy efficiency, energy infrastructure (think transmission lines and refueling stations), fossil energy, renewable energy, transportation, international exchange of best practices and sustainable communities (GPI is a partner in the [GreenStep Cities](#) program described below, and home to the [Metro Clean Energy Resource Team](#)).

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Track record: At a high level, the result of GPI's work is new clean energy policies passed into law, cleaner technology demonstrated and brought closer to market, better regulations adopted, energy and money saved, jobs created, polluting emissions reduced, and businesses' triple bottom lines improved. Examples include:

- Facilitated the adoption of world-class clean energy targets for the Midwestern Governors Association (e.g., 30% renewable energy by 2030, 2% annual efficiency improvement regionally, etc.)
- Co-led the development (and continued implementation) of a ground-breaking public-private partnership called [GreenStep Cities](#), a statewide voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program that helps cities achieve their sustainability goals. In just three years, the program already serves 25% of the

state's population.

- GPI organized and launched the [MN BioEconomy Coalition](#), a multi-stakeholder partnership devoted to creating a policy and investment environment in Minnesota that supports the development of advanced biofuels, biobased heating, and renewable chemicals industries here, displacing oil and a number of toxic chemicals produced from oil.
- For more on our [milestones](#) and accomplishments, visit us at www.betterenergy.org.

Who's Been Benefiting and Why: GPI's consensus-driven work to solve the twin challenges of climate change and the need for clean energy accrue to society at large. GPI works with states, corporations, elected officials, regulators, nonprofit leaders, national labs and others to make a sustainable energy system the norm, including:

- Progressive public policies passed that promote zero-emission hydrogen and fuel cells, next-generation biofuels and renewable bio-based chemicals, cleaner use of fossil resources and greater energy efficiency.
- Cities adopting proven sustainable development practices and policies, saving them money and making them more attractive places to live and work (65 cities so far in MN).
- Creating—and spinning off as its own non-profit—the [Midwest Renewable Energy Tracking System](#), which is used by states to track Renewable Energy Credits (each credit representing a standard unit of clean energy produced). The buying and selling of these credits expands the market for renewable energy because institutions who want to use clean energy (but don't want to build facilities themselves) can buy RECs instead.
- Working with utilities and other key interests to design a new regulatory system in which utilities will be able to earn a fair return for helping society achieve its clean energy goals: See [e21](#).

Accessing GPI: Achieving our mission is totally dependent on contributions from—and partnerships with—foundations, corporations and individuals like you. Your engagement and support will help us scale-up the clean energy technologies and practices that we know work. Here are some ways you can help:

Give. [Make a tax-deductible donation](#) in support of our mission.

Engage Your Community. [Contact us](#) about hosting a house party for GPI in your area. You invite your friends and we'll do the rest.

Sign Up For Our Newsletter. Learn about upcoming events, recent news, and learn about the latest energy issues and technologies we are working on. [Click here to sign up](#).

Join the Conversation. Share our work with your network and share your ideas with us by following us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

Residents of Minnesota. Ask your City to become a [GreenStep City](#) if it isn't already.

Remember: We build consensus, then action, toward a clean energy future where none was thought possible.

Learn more at www.betterenergy.org.

Weathering the Storm Commentary: As the perfect storm gains traction, the complexity of the challenge will intensify. GPI's proven track record, as a facilitator, for bringing together divergent forces and developing collaborative energy and environmental solutions, provides a "best practices" example of the type of effort it will take to weather the storm. GPI: We salute you.

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