

# Keeping Michigan's Energy Green

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Michigan GREEN (Group for a Renewable Energy Efficient Nation) hopes to make Michigan an alternative energy powerhouse and position the state for a bright economic future. Michigan GREEN is a consortium of 100 public and private sector members including MTI Energy Management, Cobasys, Michigan Technological University, WindStor Power Company and others. The founders believe that Michigan is a great place to be involved in alternative energy technologies because of strong support from government and a lot of public interest in building and growing alternative energy businesses.

"Being in the energy industry for 18 years, my affiliations span just about every state in the country," said Bryan Zaplitny, founder of Michigan GREEN. "But we have one of the most beautiful states in the country in my opinion... This is a great state. We're strong here. We can get it done and we can change the thinking of the rest of the country... We have the ability to be the energy epicenter for the country."

Michigan GREEN has started to set up cutting-edge alternative energy installations in the state and throughout the nation. The group promotes the use of ethanol, hydrogen, solar, battery, wind and geothermal energy technologies. The latest example is a 200-kilowatt WindStor wind turbine generation system at the Pioneer Bluff Senior Citizens Complex in Ishpeming. The WindStor turbines will generate about half of the center's electricity needs.

The consortium's Project EverGREEN Schools is promoting green energy by establishing high-tech renewable energy installations in schools, such as wind, solar and Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH) battery systems. Special learning centers in the schools give students, teachers and the general public a demonstration of how alternative energy generation works and how renewable fuels can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote energy independence. The learning centers will host week-long field study camps about renewable energy generation technologies and energy efficient products used at the site. The schools benefit by having an opportunity to potentially avoid rising utility costs without having to invest in the alternative energy equipment. "What better thing than to have wind, solar and maybe geothermal energy at your school," said Gary Westerholm, chairman of WindStor Power Company and a member of Michigan GREEN.

Michigan GREEN's education efforts span beyond the schools into the community. The group's major goal is to educate the public about energy efficiency and alternative energy technologies. Michigan GREEN partnered with The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW), a

Detroit-based nonprofit group that provides utility assistance for low-income households, the Michigan Public Service Commission and other groups to provide a Michigan Energy Kit to low-income consumers. The kits contain energy-saving items like compact fluorescent light bulbs, which use one-third of the energy of an incandescent bulb, last 10 times longer and provide the same amount of light. "It's extremely rewarding to be able to make a difference," said Zaplitny. "Based on the potential energy savings of \$100 per year from these conservation measures, the total savings on utility bills for these households will exceed \$3.5 million over the next five years."

Visit [michigangreen.org](http://michigangreen.org), for more information on Michigan GREEN.

Michigan Business Report

<http://www.michigan.org/mbr/enewsletter/combo.asp?ContentId=6EE06C64-028C-40B9-AEFC-C7266C11B3C8>

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