

For Immediate Release
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Solutions Showcase Highlights North Dakota's Expanding Clean Energy Economy

Grand Forks, ND – Media and local leaders got a glimpse of the clean energy economy in action

Members of the media and local leaders toured the City of Grand Forks, the University of North Dakota, and LM Glasfiber. Organizers of the event billed it as a 'Solutions Showcase.' The Showcase featured venues in Grand Forks that have successfully implemented clean energy solutions.

Mayor Michael Brown described the City's efforts as "practically green." Brown said that means the City has three priorities: Clean the environment, increase efficiency and save money.

Mayor Brown also spoke about how quickly awareness of these issues is growing: "When I signed the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement back in 2007, there were about 100 cities participating, there are now over 1000."

City officials led a tour of the traffic light synchronization project along 32nd Ave South and Columbia Road. That project protects the environment by reducing the number of vehicle stops and idling at red lights. In addition, the synchronization project increases quality of life by reducing travel times for commuters.

At UND, President Kelley and Technology Advancement Coordinator, Randy Bohlman, spoke about the University's leadership position on energy and climate issues. Their remarks were followed by a tour of the University's communications center. From this facility, staff can monitor and control energy use in most buildings on campus. Thanks to this investment in technology, UND uses about half the energy per capita than other campuses in the state. This building energy management project has a six-year return on investment.

"Transitioning to a new, clean energy economy"

At LM Glasfiber, a manufacturer of wind turbine blades, company representatives pointed to the Grand Forks plant's world-class productivity. LM Glasfiber officials said the Grand Forks plant came out of the 2008-2009 credit crisis relatively unscathed. LM Glasfiber opened its Grand Forks plant in 1999, now employing more than 700 people, making LM the largest manufacturing employer in Grand Forks.

"We have the technology, know-how and entrepreneurial spirit to build a clean energy future right here in North Dakota," said Jason Schaefer with the National Wildlife Federation.

The showcase was organized by the North Dakota Climate Solutions Partnership, a coalition of North Dakota organizations representing agriculture, conservation, environmental groups, and the faith community.

NDCSP members are the Environmental Law & Policy Center, Ducks Unlimited, Prairie Climate Stewardship Network, North Dakota Farmers Union, National Wildlife Federation, Pew Environment Group, and the Foundation for Agriculture and Rural Resource Management and Sustainability.

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