



EcoWise



Your Environmental Resource

Native American Edition

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Community Partnerships Bring Innovative, Energy Efficient Housing to Tribal Lands

High energy costs have long been an issue for Native American communities. Tribes in Wisconsin and Arizona have literally taken matters into their own hands by learning and putting into practice energy efficient and environmentally friendly building techniques.

This summer in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a green design team from the University of Wisconsin-Madison held a training session on sustainable building techniques. The session focused on light straw and clay building, as well as solar technology. The session was attended by employees of tribal housing offices and tribal leaders from the St. Croix Ojibwa, the Sokaogon Mole Lake Ojibwa and the Lac Courte Oreilles communities of Wisconsin. The St. Croix tribe will soon be breaking ground on two new houses and they have plans to build ten more next year. In addition to straw and clay walls, these houses will also include passive solar technology for water heating. Straw and clay are inexpensive building materials and the houses use one-third less wood than regular construction.



"We are Keepers of the Earth. We should start going back to traditional ways."

*Duane Emery
Director of Land Planning and Development,
St. Croix Tribe*

Further west, other organizations are working to bring energy efficient housing to tribal land. This summer in Window Rock, Arizona, a Navajo-owned company partnered with local volunteers to begin construction on a home for a Navajo family. The home also utilizes the straw and clay building method and once complete, will serve as both a house and a sustainable building teaching site.

Partnering with such organizations can be an invaluable opportunity for tribes. The knowledge that they impart can be shared among tribal members today as well as with future generations. The building methods which they advocate enable tribes to draw from local, natural and sustainable materials.

Built to last for a hundred years, these energy efficient homes can stand up to heat, humidity and cold temperatures, generating utility savings for years to come. As the homes incorporate the earth's elements, they are also in harmony with the Native American ethic of sustainability and using the earth's bounty while leaving a small footprint.

Special thanks to University of Wisconsin-Madison for the image featured above.

The Department Of Energy's Tribal Energy Program offers Regional and National workshops to further their mission of enhancing tribal human capacity through education and training.

Follow the link in the Events section or [click here](#) to see events near you!

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Energy Watch "Change a Light, Change the World" Bus Tour!

(click on the bus to see the tour route)



Be on the lookout for a survey coming soon, because we want YOU to tell us about your experiences with ENERGY STAR and the energy audit process.

Events

[HUD Energy Webcast](#)

September 18 - New Construction Techniques

[Department of Energy Tribal Energy Program Workshops](#)

Various dates and locations

[Council of Energy Resource Tribes Upcoming Tribal Events](#)

Various dates and locations

“Wind Power” Becomes Windfall for Tribal Authorities

On June 15th, The Intertribal Council on Utility Policy (ICOUP) was honored at the World Clean Energy Awards for its visionary work in developing a 750 kilowatt turbine at the Rosebud Sioux reservation. Under its “Environmental Justice Wind Power” plan, the ICOUP is reaching across the western United States to encourage tribes to take energy into their own hands and develop over 3,000 megawatts of tribal wind power generation capacity across the northern Great Plains by 2015.

Investing in wind energy can save hundreds of thousands of dollars in energy costs; construction of a turbine at Fort Peck stands to save local Assiniboine and Sioux over \$130,000 a year in community energy costs. Likewise, a number of resources exist that can help make wind power development feasible for tribes. For instance, the project at Rosebud was assisted by both a \$566,000 grant from the Department of Energy as well as a pledge by a Native-owned energy firm to purchase up-front 88% of the turbine’s energy credits (or “green tags”) for the next two decades. In addition, the Department of Energy’s “Native American Anemometer Loan Program” assists tribes in studying the feasibility of wind projects by providing free and low-cost anemometers on loan to test wind velocity (for more information, check out this month’s Resources section).

Moreover, as wind turbine technology spreads across reservations nationwide and tribal authorities pool their resources to generate economies of scale, tribes will become increasingly significant providers of energy. As Robert Gough, secretary of ICOUP stated, “American Indian tribes can supply clean, inexhaustible power from their rural reservations to help meet the growing demands for renewable energy.”

As tribes tap into their winds, so too will they tap into the windfalls of energy savings – and above all, a cleaner future.



Tips for Maintenance Staff and Residents

Maintenance Corner Do you know what to do when your CFL burns out?

Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) bulbs are a bright alternative to traditional bulbs as they save money on electricity bills and reduce energy consumption. However, CFLs contain small amounts of mercury which could permit mercury emission if large quantities of CFLs are disposed of in one place or if a bulb breaks. Therefore caution should be used in order to safely dispose of CFLs.

Maintenance Staff:

- Encourage safe CFL disposal by having residents save CFLs for a community household hazardous waste collection and send the bulbs to facilities capable of treating, recovering or recycling them. For specific information on CFL disposal or recycling, contact your local municipal solid waste agency and check out the EPA Bulb Recycling Guide or CFL Frequently Asked Questions in the Resources section.

Residents:

- If a bulb breaks, do not vacuum it, as this may disburse particles. Use caution to place glass in a plastic bag and wipe the area with a damp paper towel. Some states allow CFLs to be disposed of in your garbage. Carefully dispose of CFL bulbs by wrapping them in two plastic bags and taking them to an outside trashcan or another safe outdoor location for normal waste collection.
- Take advantage of local recycling options or dispose of CFLs with other hazardous household waste.

Email us with your Maintenance Corner questions at pheccinfo@nelrod.com

Regional Spotlight -

[Rosebud, SD](#) - The Intertribal Council on Utility Policy has received prestigious international recognition for its plans to develop wind power across the Great Plains.

[Lac Courte Oreilles, WI](#) - Local tribes have partnered with green design firms and experts to employ “green” design techniques, significantly lowering residential energy costs.

Resources

[Guide to Tribal Energy Development](#)
Published by the DOE

[Native American Anemometer Loan Program](#)
Sponsored by the DOE

[Tribal Energy Program Short Courses](#)
Courtesy of the DOE

[EPA Bulb Recycling Guide](#)
Information on disposing of CFLs

[CFLs - Frequently Asked Questions](#)
Courtesy of the EPA

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