

Midwest Tribal Energy Resource Association (MTERA)

Establishment of an Inter-Tribal Technical Assistance Energy Providers Network

**Sara M. Drescher
Forest County Potawatomi
Community Attorney**

Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association (MTERA)

- MTERA is an organization of tribes in the Midwest, specifically Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin.
- The history of the Native Tribal Nations in the Midwest is fraught with mistreatment of Native Americans, destructive policies, displacement and historic poverty.
- Despite the challenges of shifting territories and broken treaties, the Tribal nations of the upper Midwest have remained resilient, preserving their sovereignty and cultural ways of life despite outside pressures.
- Midwest tribes share a commitment to the environment and are inextricably linked to Midwest lands, waters and natural resources.
- Tribes recognize the importance of natural resource preservation and protection and have developed policies to promote sound environmental decisionmaking as well as sustainable projects and initiatives including renewable, green energy installations on tribal lands.

MTERA Member Tribes

- Member tribes include the Oneida Nation, Forest County Potawatomi Community, Lac du Flambeau Tribe, Ho-Chunk Nation, and Fond du Lac Tribe.
 - Additionally, current MTERA partners include the Wisconsin State Energy Office (SEO), RENEW Wisconsin, Avant Energy, Greenfire Management Services and Ater Wynn.
 - In a partnership with MTERA, these entities will help advance MTERA's goals through organization, outreach, advocacy and policy creation.

MTERA Working Vision and Working Mission

Working Vision

MTERA enhances the collaborative spirit between Midwest Tribes where the advancement of energy policy and development has created a clean, secure, sustainable energy future for Tribes and our neighbors

Working Mission

To bring energy opportunity to Midwest Tribes that advances energy policy and development by leveraging resources, sharing information, gaining experience, identifying opportunities and benefiting from real world projects.

Objectives

- Develop a clearinghouse to provide useful information, education, and outreach for Tribal communities and their neighbors.
- Be a liaison assisting federal and state agencies in the creation of comprehensive energy policy that assures Tribal and regional energy success.
- Support energy planning, provide research for financing opportunities, and investigate procurement strategies.
- Support training or apprenticeship initiatives.

MTERA Grant Funding

- MTERA sought DOE grant funding in order to further support MTERA's regional inter-tribal energy association.
 - The funding will help MTERA:
 - develop the organization by increasing membership allowing MTERA to deliver results oriented services to more tribes,
 - support the development of energy baseline information for all member tribes,
 - encourage energy consumption reduction of 25% for each tribe by 2025,
 - create and provide recommendations to member tribes on sustainable energy infrastructure options, and
 - work collaboratively with partners and federal, state and local governments to advance energy policy supportive of tribal energy independence.

Project Activities

- **Increase tribal membership in MTERA:**
 - through active communication and the dissemination of information to all Midwest Tribes.
- **MTERA will continue to work with partners in the energy sector, educational institutions, and at all levels of local, state and federal government.**
 - Building capacity depends on a network of relationships and partners that will work to assist MTERA and its members meet their energy, sustainability and infrastructure needs.
- **Assist member tribes with strategies that will optimize energy production and decrease consumption.**
 - Several Midwest Tribes have begun to develop renewable energy portfolios and have undertaken energy audits at their facilities.
 - MTERA intends to support tribes' ongoing efforts as well as create opportunities for other tribes.
 - An essential step in this process is the creation of baseline data for all member tribes so that sustainability efforts can be tracked.

Project Activities (Cont.)

- Technical Assistance to tribes is an essential component of MTERA's overall success.
 - This project is intended to build the group's technical capacity and streamline efforts of the group to provide assistance to member tribes.
 - As projects are developed and performed, the education and knowledge base of the group will expand thereby creating internal efficiencies that will reduce costs associated with technical assistance and continue to provide funds for new opportunities of growth.
- Finally, communication, coordination and policy making in conjunction with other governmental authorities is an important function of MTERA.
 - In order for long term sustainability to be a reality, policy decisions need to be influenced beyond the tribal members.
 - MTERA intends to work diligently to promote tribal energy policies and sustainable policies in general.

Project Tasks

- **Organizational Development** is the process of molding MTERA into the role of a service oriented organization. Services include training, community engagement, energy reporting, and energy development. The capacity that MTERA intends to fill requires commitment, staff, and a demand for its services. Communication with membership is key to the success of this program and these intentions.
- **Energy Baseline** provides a basic understanding of energy production and usage for homes, businesses, communities, and regions. This information provides a foundation for future strategic planning, that includes energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- **Energy Resource Assessments** provide insight into energy resource availability at the local level. Understanding what's available and how to manage it sustainably also influences future strategic planning. Project and cooperative development can be conceived out of this research.
- **Feasibility Assessment** is the next step to determine the ability for a project to succeed, considering local needs, market forces, and cultural influences.

Membership Benefits

- The benefits to member tribes should be relatively immediate and result in significant cost savings to tribes.
- One of the primary goals of MTERA is to assist member tribes by establishing a baseline of energy usage.
- A baseline will allow energy efficiency measures to be considered and will ultimately support efforts to reduce energy consumption by each individual tribe.
- A reduction of consumption by 25% is recommended for member tribes.
 - That reduction will provide direct financial offset, decrease a tribe's carbon footprint and decrease reliance on traditional fossil fuels.
 - The financial offset may be of an amount sufficient to jumpstart subsequent green energy projects.
 - Reinvestments of this type are often effective to continue spurring infrastructure

Past Actions - FCPC

- **Forest County Potawatomi Community (Wisconsin):**
 - Photovoltaic Installation, 2014-2015: Installed 923 kW of photovoltaics at multiple Tribal facilities in Milwaukee County and Forest County, Wisconsin. These systems displaced 16 to 90% of total energy usage for these buildings. The DOE grant supported approximately half of the \$2.8 million project cost. FCPC and its partners were able to tax incentives to fund the remaining portion.
 - 2 Megawatt Biogas Facility, 2014
 - Performed full audit and lighting, efficiency upgrades-ongoing.

Past Actions – Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (MN)

- **Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (Minnesota):**
 - Ratified Kyoto Protocol, 2007.
 - Photovoltaic Installation, 2015-2016: In a partnership with Minnesota Power, will install one megawatt of photovoltaics at the Black Bear Casino Resort.
 - Currently developing biomass district heating system.

Past Actions – Oneida Tribe (Wisconsin)

- Oneida Tribe (Wisconsin):
 - Performed lighting and energy efficiency upgrades at many Tribal facilities, 2010 to present.
 - Met-Tower Study, 2010-2011: Western and southern sections of the Reservation may support wind turbine construction with an average wind speed of 5.5 m/s, 12.3 mph at the 57-meter hub height.
 - Solar Thermal Installation, 2012: The Anna John Resident Centered Care Community (an elder care and health facility) supports a 48-collector system that was funded by federal, state, and utility sources.
 - Energy Optimization Model (EOM), 2011-2014: A multi-resource assessment of bioenergy, wind, solar, and ground-source resources for renewable opportunities.

Project Status

- **Established Board**
- **Developing Structure**
 - Executive Director
- **Gathering information on Contractors for baseline**
- **Developing Internal Protocols**
 - Cost Share – MTERA received a \$1,000,000 grant and has committed cost shares of at least \$142,500. Additional cost share in service reductions is anticipated.
 - Equalizing opportunities across all member Tribes.
- **Training**