

GET HANDS ON WITH HOME ENERGY AT THE MINNESOTA STATE FAIR ECO EXPERIENCE BUILDING



Continuing the 8-year run as a primary exhibitor in the Eco Experience building at the Minnesota State Fair, the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources will again be overseeing nearly 4,000 square feet of exhibit space on energy use in Minnesota homes in partnership with other state agencies, utility companies, non-profits and businesses.

Ranging from assessing the performance of existing homes to encouraging smart energy purchases (such as lighting, appliances, and mechanical equipment) to choosing advanced efficiency and renewable options when building new, this exhibit will help Minnesota residents make their homes more comfortable, durable, and efficient.

Below are selected highlights from the exhibit...

Home Assessments

The first step in any home improvement project is to understand how things are currently operating. The Minnesota Building Performance Association will be demonstrating an infrared camera, allowing fairgoers to “search for the missing heat” in an interactive display. MBPA staff will be available to describe the home assessment process and provide information on arranging a home assessment.

Several participating utility companies will also be providing a special fair discount of 25% off an advanced home energy audit.

Sealing, Insulating, and Windows

Home assessments often reveal deficiencies in sealing and insulation in a home.

This display provides details about opportunities to improve the thermal performance of homes and guides homeowners through the process of hiring competent contractors. Further information on rebates and loan programs will also be provided. Additionally, there will be a hands-on display on rehabbing old windows. Windows represent one of the most common areas of comfort complaints for homeowners, contributing to drafts, condensation, and energy loss issues. But the cost of window replacements may be out of reach for many.

This new display will identify several opportunities for homeowners to repair or upgrade existing windows through caulking, weather-stripping, or replacement components. Additionally, staff will be available to provide hands-on opportunities for fairgoers to install plastic film on an actual window, and learn more about low-cost window improvements.

Energy Star Appliances & Lighting

ENERGY STAR appliances and products are a significant way for homeowners to reduce energy use and receive other benefits—such as increased reliability. In partnership with Warners’ Stellan, we will be showcasing several ENERGY STAR appliances and hosting a random drawing for a \$500 gift certificate for ENERGY STAR appliances. Also, Commerce (in Partnership with CERTs and Creative Lighting) is again bringing back our popular “Efficient Lighting” display and will be increasing the number of LED bulbs, fixtures, and lighting controls—reflecting the current lighting market trends. The hands-on display allows fairgoers to select a variety of lighting options and see the differences in brightness and color temperature.

Mechanical Systems

In partnership with CenterPoint Energy, this display will showcase efficient home heating and water heating options, including the dangers of having an “orphaned water heater.” Additionally, there is a hands-on display showing different thermostat options.

Solar Options in Minnesota

This interactive exhibit features several displays that demonstrate different solar technologies, as well as showing real-time solar production at an existing solar installation. In partnership with the Minnesota Renewable Energy Society, Commerce will also have a LIDAR geomapping display on a large-screen that will permit Minnesotans to determine the actual solar production at their properties—including on different parts of their roofs!

Source: <http://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/blog/get-hands-home-energy-minnesota-state-fair-eco-experience-building>