Winneshiek Energy District is celebrating 10 years of inclusive, locally-owned clean energy prosperity and climate stewardship.

Here we present key accomplishments in ten impact areas.
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COVER: A very special thank you to Ruby Thompson for the cover art!
Energy Efficiency

The heart of a locally-owned clean energy transition is “green meets green:” the prosperity of clean energy jobs and wealth creation and retention, plus the climate stewardship of reduced fossil fuel emissions. Energy Efficiency is a foundational strategy. A penny saved is a penny earned, and a million saved is a million earned!

- Provided technical assistance, energy planning, and/or the direct installation of energy efficiency measures to more than 1,300 households, saving $1.7 million over 10 years*

- Provided technical assistance and energy planning to hundreds of farms and businesses, saving owners $2.5 million over practice lifespans*

- Achieved a conversion rate (from energy planning to project implementation) of 50-85%, depending on customer group, far exceeding the industry standard

- Provided or facilitated technical assistance and energy planning with dozens of nonprofits, local governments, and other institutions

* Note, the economic figures on energy efficiency savings above represent the direct impact from WED’s technical assistance and energy planning. The impact from WED’s market transformation and public engagement work is much, much larger.

Working with the WED was an amazing experience. Their knowledge and dedication to energy savings was incredibly useful as we tried to make some improvements to our building. The WED staff was helpful, offered great advice and was a wonderful motivating factor in helping us to get the work done!

Dominique & Mike Bockman, T-Bock’s Sports Bar and Grill
Another foundational strategy of “green meets green” is local ownership of and investment in the next generation of clean energy generation assets, especially solar. Solar market transformation and acceleration creates jobs across many sectors and builds and retains wealth. It is the best of “buy local,” and local self-reliance.

- Kickstarted the local market transformation by working with Northeast Iowa Community College on green trainings, building contractor partnerships, and working with banks on finance
- Provided hundreds of solar site assessments and consults, always referring customers to local contractors
- Engaged thousands through events such as solar fairs, tours, talks, and workshops, creating extensive public awareness and acceptance
- Over 350 locally-owned solar systems in Winneshiek County, representing more than $18 million invested, and roughly $31 million in utility savings over 25 years
- Over 10x the Iowa per capita solar average, and one of the highest adoption rates in the nation, but... we consider it just the tip of the iceberg!

I didn’t know anything about it—the LED lighting or solar PV—they helped me through the whole process.

Ryan Oberbroeckling, Northeast Iowa Hog Producer
A just clean energy transition actively counters environmental injustices faced by disadvantaged communities and the growing energy burden facing lower-income American households.

In partnership with Green Iowa AmeriCorps, we have served more than 1,000 households where low-income residents, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities live. We have provided combustion safety and air leakage diagnostics, basic weatherization, and efficient lighting and water measures. These services have saved lives, improved health and comfort, and will save more than $1.35 million in energy costs over the lifespan of the installed products.

We have also engaged intensely in policy advocacy towards a just transition including:

- Extensive testimony advocating for lower fixed charges in two Alliant Energy rate cases (successful in 2017, together with the Office of Consumer Advocate, saving Iowa households roughly $10 million per year)

- Continued advocacy for Iowa’s energy efficiency programs—especially the restoration of full funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program

- Making the case against utility disconnections, both during the pandemic and beyond, and for innovative approaches to reversing the growing energy burden gap and its impacts on families and communities

Major sponsorship from Decorah Bank & Trust has supported our Green Iowa AmeriCorps team for ten years running—thank you!
Climate Stewardship

Climate stewardship is built into everything we do at the Winneshiek Energy District. Together with shared Clean Energy Prosperity, it is a pillar of our “green meets green” approach. All our strategies, from energy planning to market transformation, public engagement, and policy advocacy, reduce emissions and achieve local leadership on climate stewardship.

- Roughly 118,000 tonnes of carbon reduced through locally-owned energy efficiency and renewable energy over practice lifetimes
- Provide carbon footprint calculation and reduction assistance through energy planning with customers, as well as via numerous public workshops
- Created first-in-the Midwest local carbon offset program, Oneota Tags, allowing local investment in a just and locally-owned clean energy transition
- The “universal local” Energy District model was included in Washington Governor Inslee’s national climate plan, and must be central to any national climate program or “Green New Deal”

With their support we reduced our energy use, reduced our carbon footprint, and saved some money. We helped create a better place for future generations. That’s one of the most important issues to us, doing what we can to make our planet a place where future generations can enjoy living in a sustainable and supportive community.

Lee Zook & Jan Heikes, Community Leaders
Shared clean energy prosperity is the other pillar of “green meets green.” Local investment, wealth creation and retention, and job creation matter. In the past decade, the local clean energy transition has resulted in:

- More than $20 million invested in Winneshiek County
- Roughly $35 million in lifetime savings or value generated
- About 260 jobs created, retained, or supported by these lifetime figures, based on a conservative, widely accepted methodology for “net” (not gross) job creation
- A county and community that are stronger, more resilient, and more united than ever in a shared commitment to an inclusive, locally-owned clean energy transition.

Winnesheik Energy District is a sound investment. It is seed money multiplying its impact throughout Decorah and Winneshiek County in ways both measurable and immeasurable. It is putting us on the map. It is the right thing to do.

Larry Grimstad, Decorah Bank and Trust

Winnesheik Energy District’s work within our county has been incredibly impactful. Economic development is about creating an environment for collaborative success in support of new and existing businesses. WED provides a service to our community that supports long term resiliency and community vitality and we are very fortunate to have them.

Stephanie Fromm, Winneshiek County Development, Inc.
Public Engagement is critical to creating the flywheel of momentum that crosses tipping points of acceptance and adoption of clean energy technology, and support for policy.

To date, WED has hosted:

- Dozens of public events such as solar fairs, home tours, and electric vehicle exhibitions, involving and engaging thousands of residents

- Countless educational events and activities involving area youth, led by Green Iowa AmeriCorps teams

- Over 100 monthly “Energy Breakfast” presentation-discussions in the basement of the local sports bar, on a wide variety of energy topics and with participation from a broad spectrum of the community (currently, in the format of virtual lunches!)

- An e-newsletter that reaches more than 800 subscribers, with articles viewed hundreds of times, and often influencing media even beyond northeast Iowa

Investing in the local work of the Winneshiek Energy District is an opportunity to be a part of the rebirth of rural communities transitioning to renewable energy practices. This community-based organization has provided education, thorough assessments, advice and energy-saving infrastructure improvements in a way that is accessible to many residents and business owners in our community. Supporting this important work is a chance for our community to invest long term in community revitalization.

Ann Mansfield, Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative
Energy Districts don’t exist in a vacuum. As the “universal local” clean energy implementer, they are great at partnerships and convening. From local governments to economic development to farm groups, Energy Districts partner to leverage both local and outside resources.

We have worked with countless local, state, and even regional and national partners over the years, and we thank and appreciate them all. Specific local partnership projects have included:

- Winneshiek Shared Solar (City, County, Luther, WMC, NICC)
- Decorah Sustainability Planning, 2010 and 2019-20 (City, Luther, others)
- First Step Home Efficiency with Green Iowa AmeriCorps (UNI-CEEE, DBT, UERPC, NEICAC, RHTF, REC)
- Oneota Tags Carbon Offset (DBT)
- Decorah Power and electric municipalization (City, Luther, others)
- Decorah Area Group (Alliant rate case: City, Luther, WMC, Aase Haugen)
- Serving Our Neighbors, Kickstarting Energy District Regionalization with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque
- Regional electric vehicle (EV) study and education efforts (UERPC, Farmers Market, REC)
- And of course, our partnership with Green Iowa AmeriCorps has been strong and impactful from year one
The creation of a Decorah Municipal Electric Utility would represent an unprecedented opportunity for the Decorah area to own and accelerate the clean energy future. WED assisted in the formation of, and partnered closely with, Decorah Power to lead the effort in 2017 and 2018, including:

- Organized an 8-month learning series featuring expert presentations on clean energy and municipal utilities, and created the report, “A Vision Shared.”
- Assisted Decorah Power with fundraising and grant writing in support of community education efforts
- Supported the City Council action to place the issue before voters, and supported the YES campaign in informational and myth-busting efforts (just three votes short!)
- Detailed Alliant’s misinformation campaign in Iowa Utilities Board testimony, laid groundwork for further community effort, and continue to field inquiries from other communities and to encourage collaboration
Policy was not originally intended as a core part of WED’s mission. The need to engage—especially at the state and local levels—became obvious early on through our work and from our membership. WED has:

- Provided extensive testimony at the Iowa Utilities Board in three energy efficiency dockets in 2013-14, including leading the successful effort to acquire energy efficiency funding for Green Iowa AmeriCorps
- Been a key partner and leader in the successful statewide effort to protect net energy metering (NEM), including
  » Intervened in the “distributed generation docket” 2014-2017
  » Opposed legislative efforts by MidAmerican Energy to kill NEM in 2019
  » Led testimony against Alliant Energy efforts to weaken NEM in the 2019 rate case
  » Supported legislative codification of NEM in 2020
  » Objected to Alliant’s proposed NEM tariff in 2020, which the Utilities Board has placed on hold
- Intervened extensively in two Alliant Energy rate cases, focused on reducing the energy burden on struggling households and businesses, protecting and enabling local ownership of solar energy, and accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels
- Worked closely with over a dozen local units of government on sound policies supporting clean energy development and job creation
The Energy District “universal local” model is a critical missing link in clean energy implementation throughout the country. While the idea of Energy Districts becoming a “universal local” implementer in state and national clean energy transition efforts was a dream in our early days, it is now slowly moving towards reality.

- WED pioneered the first in the nation Energy District created on the Soil and Water Conservation District model, which brings technical expertise, leadership, and resources to every county in the country
- We supported and assisted in the formation of neighboring districts, first in Clayton County (2015), then Howard County (2016), and Dubuque County (2017)
- In 2019, we were instrumental in forming the Clean Energy Districts of Iowa, the first ever association of Clean Energy Districts
- Now there are ten incorporated Energy Districts in Iowa, two in Wisconsin, and a growing movement
- We wrote and published Geography of Change, the Energy District concept document
- Energy Districts were featured in Washington Governor Jay Inslee’s premier national clean energy plan in 2019, and we are building a coalition to ensure the model is part of any national climate and clean energy plan or “Green New Deal” in 2021 and beyond

“Universal local” is a concept that can be applied to achieving a public purpose by making use of a geographical/political area that is human society friendly. It is particularly applicable to problems that require a degree of technical expertise to implement most effectively. We are just applying it to energy, as has been done with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs).

Lyle Luzum, Current Chair, Winneshiek Energy District
Thanks to all our supporters and partners, our first decade has been a powerful story of accelerating impact and a replicating model.

Our next ten, with your help, will see the dramatic scaling of a locally-owned clean energy transition, and maturation of a universal-local Energy District movement far beyond Iowa.

We’ll continue our successful strategies—from boots on the ground energy planning to market transformation and policy advocacy—and engage in many new and exciting opportunities.

**A sampling of priorities going forward:**

- **Strengthen the Clean Energy Districts of Iowa and grow the Energy District movement throughout Iowa and beyond.**
- **Economy-wide electrification, including electric vehicles (EVs) and heat pumps in buildings.**
- **Carbon farming: putting agricultural landscapes to work on permanent and prosperous carbon sequestration.**
- **Creation of a Decorah Municipal Electric Utility, and strengthening partnerships with other regional consumer-owned utilities, especially rural electric cooperatives.**
- **Community solar!**
- **Reducing energy burdens and inequity while increasing shared ownership of and benefit from the new clean energy economy.**
10 YEARS OF INVESTMENTS

$500,000 in membership contributions &

$400,000 in income from products & services leverages

$1.5 million in grant income &

$2.4 million in total budgets to serve our mission

10 YEARS OF IMPACTS

$20 million invested in local energy efficiency & renewable energy projects

$35 million in energy savings & wealth creation

250+ jobs created or retained

118,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions reductions

Membership Matters

POWER OF TEN IMPACT
THANK YOU
10 Years of Leadership

Board
Carolyn Corbin 2010-2013
Larry Grimstad 2010-present
Jeni Grouws 2010-2014
Paul Johnson 2010-2015
Craig Mosher 2010-2017
Jim Martin-Schramm 2010-present
Dave Carlson 2013-present
Barbara Massman 2014-2019
Lyle Luzum 2015-present
Kyra Bellrichard 2015-present
Wendy Stevens 2017-present
Kevin Sand 2019-present
Kristine Jepsen 2019-present

Staff & Support
Andy Johnson 2010-present
Joel Zook 2010-present
Nina Taylor 2010-present
Scott Bassford 2010-present
Nathan Dirks 2010-present
David Paquette 2010-2014
Kayla Koether 2014-2016
Kristin Eggen 2016-present
Heidi Eger 2020-present

Green Iowa AmeriCorps
John Chiles 2010-11
Dave Keller 2010-11
Ben Harkins 2010-11
Jessica Hansen 2010-11
Andy Smeby 2010-11
Sarah Wicks 2010-11
Rob Palatchi 2010-11
Melissa Bach 2011
Kim Engles 2011
Emily Scali 2011
Amanda Rubash 2011
Erica Kambs 2011-12
Josh Dansdill 2011-12
Eric Sievers 2011-12
Joel Kraus 2011-12
John Schissel 2011-12
Sarah Frana 2011-12
Andrea Becker 2011-12
Adam Kruse 2012-14
Max Molzhan 2012-14
Shane Steele 2012-14
Andrew Weckwerth 2012-14
Spencer Ward 2012-13
Clara Bergan 2013-14
Laura Ruen 2014-15
Neal Patten 2014-15
Nick Chill 2014-15
Rachel Wrolstad 2014-15
Tristen Eberling 2014-16
Doug Tuers 2015-16
Hiren Mistry 2015-16
Kristin Eggen 2015-16
Ryan Hall 2015-16
Tyler Finch 2016-17
Andrew Johnson 2016-17
Sam Pollan 2016-17
Lauren Mordini 2016-17
Matthew Gaussman 2016-18
Hannah Haugan 2017-18
Ashley Lookenehouse 2017-18
Emily Osborne 2017-18
Drew Peeler 2017-18
Anna Restemayer 2018 summer
Jeffrey Lauck 2018 summer
Gracie Engle 2018-19
Maddy Knutson 2018-19
Katherine Hannigan 2018-19
Brianna Burke 2018-20
Ally Peters 2019 summer
Luke Forsberg 2019 summer
Troy Downey 2019-20
Jessica Heguhl 2019-20
Lucas Griesheimer 2019-20
Rowan Collins 2019-20
Colin Weber 2020 summer
Collin Kern 2020-21
Mara Mergens 2020-21
Maggie Andersen 2020-21
Martin Donovan 2020-21
Matt Staver 2020-21

WINNESEHIEK
ENERGY
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