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- ND REC/RTC Directory

Climate stewardship conference draws international attention

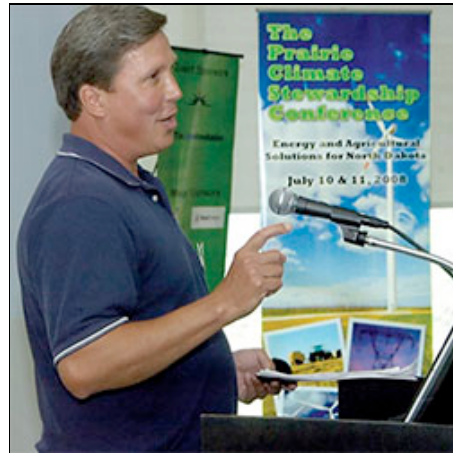


PHOTO BY KENT BRICK

Mike Williams, Fargo, led a small group discussion on community initiatives that can succeed in conserving energy and reducing carbon emission.

Leaders and concerned citizens from the academic, scientific, public policy, electric utility, public interest and spiritual communities gathered last month to consider "stewardship" of the prairie.

The Prairie Climate Stewardship Conference was held July 10 and 11 on the University of Mary campus in Bismarck. The conference was presented by the Prairie Stewardship Network and the Great Plains Institute.

Conference leaders Renee Gopal and Brad Crabtree indicated the purpose of the conference was to conduct an extensive conversation about global climate change and the work to be done as a consequence. The attendance of Tim McRae, climate change and energy adviser for the British Consulate-General, underscored this conference's intention to cast the climate change challenge as a worldwide priority.

The Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of North Dakota/North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) served as a major sponsor for the conference. At the conference, electric co-op leaders discussed progress co-ops are making in reducing carbon emissions during coal-fired electricity generation.

Much of the second day of the conference was devoted to topical small group discussion. These small groups focused on climate change work in the realms of community organizations, buildings, schools, farms and ranches, and youth programs.

Mike Williams, Fargo city commissioner, helped lead the group discussion focusing on community projects. Williams described the array of energy conservation and clean energy initiatives under way in Fargo, including methane gas capture for power generation at the city landfill, and the wide circulation of durable cloth shopping bags

"In our community, it's 'reduce, re-use, and recycle'—that's what works," Williams said. Williams also currently chairs the N.D. Alliance for Renewable Energy (NDARE), a broad coalition of organizations—including NDAREC and several of its member co-ops—working in concert to advance renewable energy policy in the state. For more information, go to:

www.ndare.org



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