



Volume 2, Issue 3  
March 2010

***In this issue...***

KREC's March Quarterly Meeting

KREC Joins Wind Working Group

US Department of Commerce Establishes Global Climate Change Mitigation Incentive Fund

Community-Based Solar – the SUN Act

National NGV Fleet Summit in Louisville

40th Anniversary of Earth Day – April 22

**KREC's March Quarterly Meeting**

KREC hosted its spring quarterly meeting at the Capitol Annex in Frankfort on March 10. The event provided an opportunity for KREC members to network with each other and with government officials during the Kentucky General Assembly's 2010 regular session. The meeting brought together KREC members, guests and renewable energy professionals from many areas of the Commonwealth who have an interest in renewable energy policies, research and commercial development.

Following the meeting, Cam Metcalf, principal investigator for KREC and executive director of KPPC, testified before the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee on KREC's activities, research funding and successes to date. After the presentation, Mr. Metcalf took questions from the Senators on topics including coordination and communication among the many renewable energy groups in Kentucky.



*KREC members and guests had an opportunity to meet and share information at the March 10 meeting in Frankfort.*

**KREC Joins Wind Working Group**

KREC was recently invited to join the Tennessee Valley and Eastern Kentucky Wind Working Group. As a member, KREC looks forward to helping the group fulfill its goal of promoting responsible development of wind power in the region.

The Wind Working Group is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and is administered by the state of Tennessee's Economic and Community Development Energy Office. The group was co-founded in 2004 by TVA and Southern Alliance for Clean Energy in partnership with the state of Tennessee and helped the state join a national network of state Wind Working Groups that are part of the U.S. Department of Energy's [Wind Powering America \(WPA\) program](#).

Members include representatives from utility interests, state and federal agencies, economic development organizations, non-government organizations, local decision makers, educational institutions and wind industry representatives. The working group is facilitated by the [Southern Alliance for Clean Energy](#).

Learn more about the group's activities by visiting their [Web site](#).

### **U.S. Department of Commerce Establishes Global Climate Change Mitigation Incentive Fund**

In fiscal year 2009, Congress directed that the Economic Development Administration (EDA) should use the Global Climate Change Mitigation Incentive Fund to focus on the nexus between economic development and environmental quality. Congress noted that economic development must address the effects of climate change.

The intent of the Fund will be to finance projects through grants that foster the green economy by promoting economic competitiveness while enhancing environmental quality. Such projects should promote sustainability, diversify the economy, foster 21st century higher-skill, higher-wage jobs and advance EDA's mission. Types of projects covered under the fund include:

- Renewable Energy
- Energy Efficiency
- Reuse/Recycling/Restoration
- Green Building

Eligible applicants include commercial businesses, non-profit organizations, local governments and educational institutions. Learn more about the Fund and how to apply through the U.S. Department of Commerce's online [pdf publication](#).

### **Community-Based Solar – the SUN Act**

U.S. Sen. Mark Udall, D-Colo., has introduced legislation to extend tax breaks to individual homeowners who invest in community solar projects. Currently, tax law allows individuals to receive a 30 percent tax credit for installing solar panels on their property.

The Solar Uniting Neighborhoods Act (SUN) -- would allow homeowners to receive tax credits for panels installed somewhere else. The legislation would extend the credit to community-owned solar farms, where neighbors designate areas for installation of community solar panels.

By some estimates, grouping solar panels can reduce the cost by up to 30 percent compared to installing solar panels on every roof in a neighborhood.

In a March 17 press release, Udall stated that "by eliminating the requirement that the solar panel be on one individual's property, it frees Americans to work together on community projects where each

According to Udall, the SUN Act would be a logical amendment to the clean energy bill introduced in December, 2009 by Sens. John Kerry, Lindsay Graham and Joe Lieberman. The cost would be offset if the bill passes as part of a larger package. The tax credit would run until 2016.



*Community-owned solar farms have the potential to provide renewable energy to more homes at a lower*

individual can claim a tax credit on part of a shared overall cost project."



### USDA's Rural Energy Savings Program

Energy efficiency represents the cheapest, cleanest and quickest of all energy resources. To help achieve energy efficiency in rural communities, Congress is considering recently-introduced legislation called the Rural Energy Savings Program Act.

Under the measure, which has bipartisan sponsorship and support, individual electric cooperatives or state-based groups of cooperatives would apply to USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to borrow money to fund local energy efficiency programs. The bill would create a \$4.9 billion loan program for use by the RUS to make funds available to cooperatives with a zero percent interest rate.

Cooperatives would then make this money available to consumer residences or businesses in the form of micro-loans that can be paid back over a period of 10 years or less with the energy savings achieved. The micro-loans will carry an interest rate of up to three percent to establish a loan loss reserve and to partially defray administrative costs.

Typical consumer loans will be \$1,500 to \$7,000, and will cover sealing, insulation, HVAC systems, boilers, roofs and other energy saving opportunities that the utility has demonstrated to RUS as improvements that will produce sufficient savings. Consumers then repay the cooperatives for the installation and material costs through an extra charge on their utility bills. Consumers would save even more on their energy bills after the loan is repaid.

The proposed legislation is **not** a grant program. According to the USDA, RUS is a loan program for cooperatives to provide consumer loans. The cooperative is required to repay the loan to the government.



On Wednesday, March 24, 2010, from 8:00am to 6:00pm EDT, the National NGV Fleet Summit will offer an intensive day of sessions in Louisville featuring high level representatives from some of the nation's top fleets talking about their experience using natural gas in their own operations.

Expected attendees will include fleet managers, procurement specialists, maintenance directors, equipment manufacturers, technology providers, natural gas suppliers, infrastructure developers, engineers, academic researchers, funding program representatives, community members, environmental organizations, media representatives and others. T. Boone Pickens, author of *The Pickens Plan* will provide the luncheon keynote address.

Pre-registration is required. Learn more at the organization's [Web site](#).



#### **40th Anniversary of Earth Day – April 22**

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. Since April 22, 1970, Earth Day celebrations have grown. In 1990, Earth Day went global, with 200 million people in over 140 nations participating, according to the [Earth Day Network](#), a non-profit organization that coordinates Earth Day activities. Make plans now to celebrate Earth Day at work and at home, and encourage family and friends to get involved. Suggestions for improving environmental performance and efficiency are listed at the [KPPC Web site](#).

#### **Contribute an Article to *REnews!***

KREC would like to publish your thoughts on renewable energy and energy efficiency in Kentucky. Please send your opinions, articles or news about RE happenings in the Commonwealth to [KREC@kppc.org](mailto:KREC@kppc.org). A short piece is preferable (300 or fewer words works best).

Make your voice heard – we want to give KREC members a forum to spread the word about renewable energy efforts and issues.

