

*****ATTACHMENTS*****

Sheboygan County Sustainability

By: Jason Peters

As a student at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, I was asked to look at my home county's comprehensive plans to see what type of sustainable energy efforts were in place. Sustainable energy is on the forefront of the energy revolution across the country. It helps bring energy jobs to the state while being environmentally responsible. It also helps decrease healthcare costs as pollution effects no longer pose health risks to the population and neighboring communities.

I personally grew up in the city of Plymouth within Sheboygan county. I attended Plymouth Comprehensive High School and graduated in 2012. I graduated UW Sheboygan with my associates before transferring to UW Stevens Point to pursue my degree in Biochemistry with a minor in Sustainable Energy. I plan to continue my education after graduation to complete my Master's degree in Environmental Engineering or Sustainability.

Unfortunately, the county of Sheboygan does not have a sustainability effort within its comprehensive plan. This is because they didn't want to interfere with the plans within the cities of Sheboygan County. I decided to change the focus onto the city of Sheboygan, the largest city in the county limits.

The city of Sheboygan has set forth on the initiative to become more sustainable. They have started the Green Tier Legacy Community Sustainability Plan in 2015 that runs until 2019.

Within this plan they highlight their sustainability efforts, mainly in waste reduction and city energy efficiency. They're also trying to make more environmentally conscious decisions within land use, transportation, utilizing local food, and natural resource management.

The city of Sheboygan has set the objective to foster energy conservation and local energy production from renewable resources. They have made it easier for new buildings to incorporate renewable energy, such as solar, to the building. Sheboygan also ranks very highly in Wisconsin with the most energy star certified buildings per capita. They recognize the need to reduce the amount of money leaving the city and state for energy production and fossil fuel imports for energy production. They are partnering with Focus on Energy and the Second Nature Program to help encourage renewable energy installations. This is all great for short term, but more should be considered when thinking long term.

The city currently has a coal powered power plant, Edgewater, that is currently going through retirement. This leaves a void in local energy production. Luckily Lakeshore Technical College is training the next generation of wind and solar installers and mechanics. This opens up a great opportunity to support the local college and make renewable installations all the more important when considering retention of educated individuals in the region. Solar and Wind are both great options for the reason. Sheboygan is located on Lake Michigan which could possibly open the door to offshore Wind. Many municipal buildings could incorporate rooftop solar along with the rehabilitation of buildings across the city.

Small projects help lead the way and show return on investments that can encourage stakeholders to support further implantation. Myself, and my fellow students strongly

encourage the incorporation of renewables onto the city agenda and sustainability plan, not only on the residential level, but utility scale as well. Solar Bee gardens are a great way to show your support for not only renewables, but an increasingly threatened species while also providing benefit to local farmers, community gardens, and flowers across the city. This is just a small example of the endless amount of possibilities the city can consider when leading the way for the next generation of young minds to grow and reside in this beautiful area.