

*This is the ninety-second edition of what is a “twice-monthly or so” News You Can Use newsletter for participants in one of the Initiative Foundation’s Planning and Preservation programs. This newsletter is sent to everyone that has provided an e-mail at one of our Conservation-based training events. If you wish to be removed or if you have other names/e-mails to add please contact Don Hickman ([dhickman@ifound.org](mailto:dhickman@ifound.org)) or Leah Posterick ([lposterick@ifound.org](mailto:lposterick@ifound.org)). The goal of this publication is to share funding opportunities, new resources, and pending hearing or training events of common interest.*



**INITIATIVE  
FOUNDATION**

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The BAELN 2008-2009 Season The Path Less Traveled is pleased to offer...

### **Better Birding in Brainerd and Beyond**

Thursday, December 18, 2008, from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Held at the MN Pollution Control Agency, 7678 College Road, Suite 105, Baxter/Brainerd. Free. All are invited.

Birding is the second most popular hobby in the country -- right behind gardening. If you are one of the many who enjoy learning about our feathered friends, or would like to start, come increase your knowledge about what makes good bird habitat on your property and what they really like to eat. Judd Brink of MN Backyard Birds ([www.MNbackyardbirds.com](http://www.MNbackyardbirds.com)) has been working with local resorts and private landowners to help them create more attractive environments for birds that live here year-round and those that just pass through. Judd will present helpful information for novices and experts, and he will answer your many questions.

If you have questions concerning this presentation, please contact Phil Hunsicker at 218-824-5095 or [phunsicker@1000fom.org](mailto:phunsicker@1000fom.org).

The Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network (BAELN) works to create opportunities for people in the environmental field, and the community, to receive timely information on environmental and sustainability issues, along with the chance to network with others. This season’s theme “The Path Less Traveled” offers topics that can help us improve our communities and the environment in which we live. Each gathering held the third Thursday of the month from 3:00-5:00 p.m., will include an hour-long presentation with time for questions, networking and refreshments. The events are free and all are invited to come explore the path less traveled.

BAELN is a collaborative effort of the following organizations: 1000 Friends of Minnesota, Central Lakes College, Crow Wing County Soil and Water Conservation District, Initiative Foundation, MN Department of Natural Resources, MN Department of Transportation, MN Pollution Control Agency, The Nature Conservancy, Paul Bunyan Trail Association, and University of Minnesota Extension.

For information on BAELN, please contact Stephen Mikkelsen at (218) 855-5001, or toll free at 1-800-657-3864.

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**Reducing Energy Costs in Local Government Conference - January 22, 2009**

St. Cloud Civic Center, 9:00 am - 4:30 pm, <http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/energyconference>

Minnesota local governments are facing serious economic challenges because of increased costs as well as decreased revenue. Volatile and unpredictable energy costs are also adding to these stresses on local government budgets. This conference seeks to give public entities a head start in preparing for an uncertain energy future. Learn about actions that local government has taken in Minnesota and can take now to reduce energy costs.

The conference is sponsored by the Association of Minnesota Counties, League of Minnesota Cities, Minnesota Association of Townships, Minnesota Department of Commerce - Office of Energy Security, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Minnesota School Boards Association.

Attendees will hear from public entities that have successfully reduced their energy bills: what steps have been effective, and what benefits have been realized. There will also be an opportunity to hear from and talk with assistance providers that can help local governments reduce their energy costs.

This conference is for officials, staff, or citizens connected with cities, counties, school districts, and townships. The early registration fee is \$40 up until January 15, 2009, and \$50 thereafter. For more information and for registration instructions, see the web site above.

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**Harnessing Resources & Teamwork for MN's Energy Future - February 10-11**

St. Cloud Civic Center, <http://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/>

Sponsored by the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) and their partners, this conference is for everyone interested in being a part of Minnesota's clean energy future - farmers, utility representatives, school staff, local officials, students, business owners and members of any community. It's an excellent opportunity to learn what people are doing across the state on energy issues, and to connect and share resources.

The event starts on Tuesday, February 10th with optional in-depth workshops and an evening reception, followed by the daylong conference on February 11th. Conference topics are wide ranging and include:

- Local Foods
- Cities Leading the Way
- Biogas Digesters
- Geothermal
- Energy Efficiency
- Small-Scale Wind
- Solar
- Affordable Housing

The opening keynote speaker is Randy Udall, energy expert from Colorado and board member of the Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas - USA. The event also includes a legislative forum moderated by Kerri Miller of Minnesota Public Radio.

Registration is \$50 for the conference and \$30 for the pre-conference workshops. For details visit the web site above.

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### **Minnesota North Woods Carbon Credit Partnership**

<http://www.dovetailinc.org/DovetailNews111908.html>

The Aitkin and Cass County Land Departments are collaborating with Minneapolis-based Dovetail Partners and Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences to explore ecosystem service markets for northern Minnesota. Recognizing the importance of responsibly managed forests and the potential to market the resulting benefits, this project will explore carbon storage in trees and other vegetation (carbon sequestration), water quality improvements, habitat for wildlife, recreation and other opportunities.

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### **Minnesota Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant Program**

<http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/demogrant.htm>

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture will award up to \$150,000 in grants through the 2009 round of its annual funding program. Up to \$25,000 is available for on-farm sustainable agriculture research or demonstration projects in Minnesota. The purpose of the program is to fund practices that promote environmental stewardship and conservation of resources as well as improve profitability and quality of life on farms and in rural areas.

Eligible recipients include Minnesota farmers, individuals at Minnesota educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and local natural resource agencies. Proposals are due January 16, 2009.

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### **Miss the meeting on wind energy opportunities in Paynesville?**

Click here ([http://www.ifound.org/news\\_newsroom.php?NWArticleID=166](http://www.ifound.org/news_newsroom.php?NWArticleID=166)) to link to handouts from the meeting!

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### **What's Happening at the Happy Dancing Turtle?**

#### *HDT Happenings Calendars*

The 2008-2009 HDT calendars are out, and they are chock-full of information, and valuable coupons! Calendars were distributed through the PRB Schools, and are available at the PRB District Office, Pine River Library, PRB Family Center, Stone Woman Herbal, Heart & Hara Studio, PR Quilter's Pantry & Coffee Shop, and the Pine River Information Center. If you haven't gotten your copy, be sure to pick one up! If you need us to mail you one, you can call Quinn at 218.587.2303.

#### *Beekeeping Classes*

Jim has put the bees to sleep for the winter, and will resume classes in January. Watch for details on our website: [www.happydancingturtle.org](http://www.happydancingturtle.org), as well as future newsletters.

### *Rain Barrels*

Rain barrels are still available through the Cass County Environmental Services for \$56 + tax. If you are interested in purchasing a rain barrel, contact them at 218.547.7399. The HUG campus is a pick-up location for the rain barrels.

### *Education & Logistics Assistant*

HDT is hiring an assistant to help with our educational programming and events, as well as some administrative work. A detailed job description, and application are available on our website: [www.happydancingturtle.org](http://www.happydancingturtle.org). If you are interested in applying for this position, contact Stef at 218.851.8448, or [stef@hugllc.com](mailto:stef@hugllc.com), no later than November 21.

### *Back to Basics*

Back to Basics has been scheduled for January 31, 2009! We have already started planning for some great workshops, discussion groups, a luncheon, and kids' activities, and will have several interesting vendors & exhibitors. We are in the process of mailing out registration information to prospective presenters, vendors, and exhibitors. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in presenting a workshop, or having a booth, and you don't receive information in the mail, please call Barb at 218.587.2303. Registration brochures for participants should be sent out at the end of December. If you aren't on our mailing list for B2B, call and we will add you to the list!