

# Marlboro's renewable resurgence

## Town committee focused on energy use continues to grow

By JAIME CONE / Reformer Staff  
Brattleboro Reformer

Saturday June 26, 2010

MARLBORO -- The Marlboro Energy Committee is growing and expanding the scope of its work. Energized by the town's recent participation in the Vermont Council on Rural Development's Community Visit Program, more residents have recently joined the committee, and the first steps toward new wind, hydro-electric and solar projects are under way.

Tom Simon, chairman of the energy committee, said there are multiple ongoing efforts that focus on facilitating both individual and community-based projects.

"One of the things we've been working on is having a gallery of homes that already have some sort of renewable energy system installed," said Simon.

The online display of local homes with systems like solar panels and wind installations will include basic information about the cost and size of the installations, how they are performing, what their production levels are.

"They would actually be able to get some basic information and be able to assess the costs versus the returns, so to speak," Simon said.

The site will also give contact information for homeowners who are comfortable with talking to people about their experience, and the times when it's best to reach them, so that those who are considering alternative sources of energy for their own home can discuss it with someone who lives nearby and has already gone through the process, said Simon.

"We're anticipating dedicating one day during the year to have an actual tour of these homes," he added. His goal is to have the basic elements of the new Web pages up and running by next month.

The town is also pooling its resources to develop a map of Marlboro that shows how conducive different areas of town are to the use of solar panels. Marlboro resident Jeffrey Bower has offered the benefit of his 18 years of solar energy experience.

"The idea then would be that the map itself would be a resource for everyone in town," Bower said.

"Of course you can landscape your yard and house, but this will show where there are big and small openings and south-sloping ground," he explained. "We want to be able to show the people of Marlboro three different categories -- really good, fair and relatively poor."

Bower hopes to have the map complete in time for the town fair on Sept. 11; hard copies will be available at the town offices, and the committee is also looking at the possibility of putting it on the town website.

As far as hydro goes, there are several sites in town that might support small hydro, or micro-hydro, systems and "perhaps some larger, community-sized solar or wind installations," said Simon.

He added that he feels like the community is ready to get behind these efforts, based on the positive response at the community visits, where the Vermont Council on Rural Development helped residents narrow down their wish list of projects to two priorities the town could tackle.

Looking more closely at alternative energy sources came in third place, just behind building a community center and increasing walkability, so the VCRD brought in experts on energy for a discussion May 24.

"I got the sense that people in Marlboro are very interested, given current events, in generating some sustainable, renewable energy with the idea of being able to wean us all off of fossil fuels," Simon said.

Another benefit to the community visits was that they gave the town a jumping off point in terms of gathering available resources, Simon added.

"We are compiling a list of resources -- installers in the industry that would be knowledgeable in helping either homeowners or the town, on a larger scale," he said.

One goal of the committee is to make Marlboro a model that other small, like-minded towns can look up to when it comes to renewable energy.

Meetings of the Marlboro Energy Committee are the third Tuesday of each month and are open to the public. The next meeting is scheduled for July 20 at 7 p.m. at the Marlboro Elementary School's Junior High room.

*Jaime Cone can be reached at [jcone@reformer.com](mailto:jcone@reformer.com) or 802-254-2311, ext. 277.*

Close Window

Send To Printer