

Midwest Energy Consortium and Great Plains Institute: New partnership focuses on transforming Wisconsin's energy future

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Broad stakeholder input will help address rapid changes in how power is produced, distributed and consumed

MILWAUKEE – The Midwest Energy Research Consortium (M-WERC) and the Great Plains Institute (GPI) are launching a new collaborative, stakeholder-driven effort. Together with stakeholders they will work to define the role technology can play in helping Wisconsin's energy distribution system evolve to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

M-WERC and GPI will assemble a broad group of interested parties to guide decision-makers as they consider grid modernization efforts in Wisconsin. The group will include members from investor-owned and public utilities, electric cooperatives, consumer advocacy groups, environmental organizations, technology providers, universities, third-party energy providers, transmission entities and government.

“We need this critical conversation to address the rapidly-evolving energy industry and how we can respond to a number of changes in how power is produced, distributed and consumed to drive economic development for the Energy, Power and Controls sector,” said M-WERC Executive Director Dan Ebert.

The biggest shifts include evolving public attitudes about power, with more customers wanting cleaner energy without sacrificing reliability, and planned reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from states and utilities. There's also the ongoing transformation in Wisconsin's economy to adapt to the millions of new

devices that make up what's known as the Internet of Things (IoT), as well as changes to how power is produced, stored and distributed.

"The knowledge and expertise that come from this forward-looking effort between utilities and stakeholders will generate a blueprint for a grid that can meet Wisconsin's energy needs in the future," said GPI Vice President Doug Scott. M-WERC is a coalition of academic partners, utilities, and companies that uses science and technology-driven innovation to spur economic development in Wisconsin's Energy, Power and Controls (EPC) sector, which employs 100,000 people.

GPI is a Minnesota-based nonprofit that works nationally to forge common ground among utilities, business, labor and environmental groups on energy solutions. GPI's has a proven-track record in gathering stakeholder input outside the formal regulatory process to respond effectively to changes in the electric system. Ebert will lead the effort for M-WERC, drawing on the organization's expertise to provide strategic direction, identify and recruit stakeholders, and recruit experts to present to the group. Scott will assist with selecting stakeholder group members, coordinating and facilitating meetings, and developing its reports and recommendations. The new initiative will also help answer key questions for M-WERC's members, including what technologies are in demand, what research gaps exist and what economic or regulatory barriers stand in the way of new markets emerging. Be sure to follow M-WERC on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates.