



NEWS RELEASE

For Release
October 7, 2016

For more information, contact:
Deb Mirasola at (608) 787-1378 or
Katie Thomson at (608) 787-1323

Dairyland Power Cooperative Expands *Solar for Schools*

La Crosse, WI— Dairyland Power Cooperative is expanding its *Solar for Schools* renewable energy and education initiative through a new collaboration with Western Technical College. A solar generation project is being brought online at Western's Independence campus, where a ribbon-cutting event will be held today.

“We are delighted to partner on a project that will assist in the education and training of the workforce well into the future,” said Brian Rude, Dairyland Vice President, External and Member Relations. “In addition to ensuring that students will continually train on new technology, this solar array will help hold down Western's energy costs at the Independence location.”

The solar project will provide instructional opportunities and generate renewable energy for the campus facility. Four photovoltaic solar arrays feature 36 panels, which will produce an estimated 16,000 kWh of energy per year. Western staff will be able to monitor the total and hourly output, the environmental benefits delivered, temperatures, voltage, amperage and power metrics. Students in programs related to electronics and energy management will use this data as part of their curriculum and will learn the basics of solar array installation and maintenance.

“This unique industry partnership allows Western to extend the learning opportunities for our students while meeting the growing need for solar technicians in our district,” said Patti Balacek, Dean of Workforce and Development at Western. “It also demonstrates the commitment Dairyland has made to helping grow the next generation of workers.”

In April 2016, Dairyland announced that three Western Wisconsin public schools will benefit from the *Solar for Schools* initiative. Currently, 12 kilowatt solar installations are under construction at Alma Area School (K-12), Cochrane-Fountain City School (K-12) and De Soto Area Middle & High School. All three schools are near Dairyland power plant facilities located within its cooperative service territory.

With headquarters in La Crosse, Wis., Dairyland provides wholesale electricity to 25 member distribution cooperatives and 17 municipal utilities. A Touchstone Energy Cooperative, Dairyland's service area encompasses 62 counties in four states (Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois). Dairyland delivers electricity via nearly 3,200 miles of transmission lines and 292 substations located throughout the system's 44,500 square mile service area. Dairyland's generation resources include coal, natural gas, hydro, solar, wind and landfill gas. For more information, please visit www.dairylandpower.com.

###

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 