

# Wisconsin's Focus on Energy Program

Central Waters Brewing Company is the first brewery in Wisconsin to heat its in-house water using solar energy, thanks to a 960-square-foot hot-water system. With energy production estimated at 2,500 therms per year, the system is expected to meet more than 18 percent of the brewery's annual hot-water needs.



The Focus on Energy program (Focus) is a ratepayer-funded energy efficiency and renewable energy program that has been operating in Wisconsin since 2001. Focus serves customers of participating electric and natural gas utilities, including all investor-owned utilities, about 90% of municipal electric utilities, and a majority of the rural electric cooperatives. Focus funding is currently set at 1.2 percent of utility natural gas and electric revenues. Overseen by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, the program is administered by Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation (WECC) under contract to a consortium of the state's investor-owned utilities. Focus on Energy funding for 2009 was just under \$92 million; of this amount, 62% was spent on energy efficiency

*“Working with CESA has allowed the Focus on Energy program to collaborate and compare our program offerings to other states across the county. Both of these activities help to improve our programs and services and validate our key accomplishments, such as the 2009 CESA Biogas Award, to Focus on Energy policy and decision makers.”*

—Kathy Kuntz

projects with business customers, 29% on residential energy efficiency, and 9% on customer-sited renewable energy projects.

Focus's Business and Residential program portfolios address efficiency



As part of their Renewable Energy Outdoor Learning Center, The Wausau School District successfully completed their installation of a 100 kW wind turbine at Wausau East High School. Planning and support were provided by Seventh Generation Energy Systems and Focus on Energy. Focus staff presented the incentive check for \$100,000 in person at a ceremony at the site of the system. The turbine is expected to produce over 116,000 kWh per year.

across all customer segments and technologies. Through 2009, the Renewable Energy program provided a variety of services and incentives to the solar electric, solar water heating, distributed wind, biogas digester, and non-residential biomass combustion renewable energy markets in Wisconsin.



**Kathy Kuntz**  
Director of Energy Programs

**Wisconsin Focus on Energy**  
431 Charmany Dr.  
Madison, WI 53719-1234

PHONE 608-249-9322 x278  
EMAIL [Kathyk@weccusa.org](mailto:Kathyk@weccusa.org)  
WEB [www.focusonenergy.com](http://www.focusonenergy.com)



## HIGHLIGHTS



ST Paper of Oconto Falls received \$237,500 from Focus on Energy to help defray the \$5.4 million cost of the company's new biomass combustion renewable energy system. Their new wood-fired boiler will replace an estimated 4.83 million therms with the use of about 50,000 tons of local wood residues.

The company's biomass system is a 1,500-horsepower wood-fired boiler and is an alternative to using natural gas to produce heat, producing 95% of the steam needed for the paper plant's process requirements. This project is the largest natural gas-saving project in the history of the Focus on Energy program. Public Service Commission Chairperson Eric Callisto and Renewable Energy staff met in Oconto Falls to present a symbolic check to ST Paper Management.



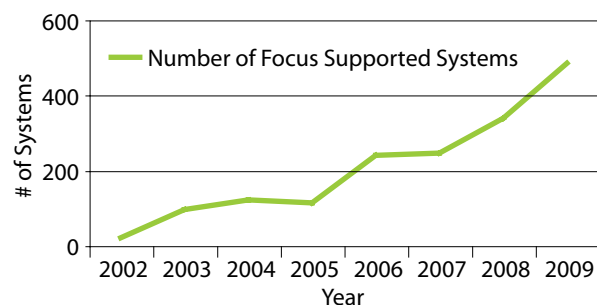
Gundersen Lutheran Health Systems and City Brewing Company, both based in La Crosse, partnered on an innovative cogeneration project fueled by biogas from the brewery's waste treatment process. Focus on Energy provided funding of \$237,500 for the \$2.3 million, 633 kW anaerobic digester system installed at City Brewery. The system, which started operating in October, is expected to generate three million kWh per year of electricity, equivalent to 8-10% of the power used on Gundersen Lutheran's La Crosse and Onlaska campuses. Heat generated from the engine is also captured and recycled back to City Brewery's wastewater treatment process to make it more efficient.

Gundersen Lutheran dedicated their City Brewery biogas system on October 7, 2009, in La Crosse. L&S Associates represented Focus at the ceremony. Other participants included the chief executive officer of Gundersen Lutheran, the mayor of La Crosse, and staff from the Office of Energy Independence (OEI).

In 2009, the program assisted **476 RENEWABLE ENERGY INSTALLATIONS**, including 267 solar electric systems, 164 solar water heating systems, 30 distributed wind systems, 8 dairy anaerobic digesters, and 7 biomass energy systems. In addition, 614 renewable energy projects were approved in 2009, an 83% increase from 2008.

Over the past eight-year time frame, renewable energy installations have increased significantly, with the **MAJOR INCREASES IN 2009**, as can be seen in the graph below.

**Number of Focus on Energy Supported Renewable Energy Systems Installed each Year**



The program has developed a strong **INFRASTRUCTURE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY MARKET PROVIDERS**. By the end of 2009, there were 57 solar electric installation companies, 88 companies offering solar water installation services, 21 distributed wind installers, 17 companies installing biomass combustion equipment, and 24 biogas development and installer companies. In addition, 100 Wisconsin renewable energy professionals were certified to do renewable energy site assessments. All told, about 275 renewable energy companies are now actively providing goods and services in Wisconsin and working with Focus on Energy. Thirty-one of the solar electric installers are Wisconsin-based and North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP)-certified, and the rest are working towards NABCEP approval (a Focus requirement). Wisconsin's 12 NABCEP-certified solar water heating installers represent the most of any state in the US.

Wisconsin continues to lead the nation in the number of **BIOGAS ANAEROBIC DIGESTERS** installed and operating, with a total of 31. These systems are now providing over 12 MW of electricity from 46,000 cows.

At the request of the Public Service Commission, the three Focus portfolios—Renewable Energy, Business Programs, and Residential Programs—launched an initiative in the last quarter of 2009 to integrate renewables into the two efficiency portfolios. The outcome of these efforts included strategies for **INTEGRATING RENEWABLES AND EFFICIENCY** into a one-stop approach for customers as well as some significant program design changes, such as tiered renewable energy incentives that encourage customers to do efficiency first. Changes also streamline some processes, including site assessments.