

# ENERGY WISE

for your Home



**While the electricity delivered to your home includes increasing amounts of renewable energy, our Wellspring Renewable Energy® program gives you the option to help us do even more for the environment. By participating in Wellspring, you not only help support wind and solar development in Minnesota, but you also help reduce our dependency on non-renewable energy sources, like fossil fuels.**

## WELLSPRING RENEWABLE ENERGY®

### Support Wind and Solar Power!

#### What does participating in Wellspring mean?

Wellspring Renewable Energy is a voluntary program offered to our members. While the electricity delivered to all homes and businesses includes renewable energy in the mix, participating in Wellspring is a way for members to provide additional support for renewable energy technologies.

#### How does the program work?

Those who participate in the Wellspring program are purchasing renewable energy credits (RECs). For every 1,000 kilowatt-hours (kWhs) of clean, renewable electricity generation, a REC is created. A REC embodies all of the environmental attributes of the generation and can be tracked separately from the underlying electricity. Dakota Electric provides Wellspring energy to you through Great River Energy, our wholesale power supplier. This means you can support renewable energy and its future without having to build or buy anything.

#### How much will it cost?

Wellspring is sold in 100 kWh blocks, and members can purchase a fixed number of blocks each month or enough to power their monthly electricity use. You have two options:

- **Option 1:** Choose a fixed number of 100 kWh blocks to purchase each month. You can purchase just wind energy, just solar energy, or a combination of both. You cannot purchase more than your minimum monthly use over the past 12 months.
- **Option 2:** Let the number of blocks you purchase each month fluctuate based on the amount of energy you use. You must choose **either** wind energy or solar energy with this variable option.

Each 100 kWh block of wind energy costs an extra \$0.20\* per month.

Each 100 kWh block of solar energy costs an extra \$2\* per month.

#### How long do I have to stay on the program?

You must remain on the program for at least 12 months. After 12 months, you may discontinue at any time.

#### Where is Wellspring Renewable Energy produced?

Wind energy is produced from giant wind turbines mainly in southern Minnesota, while the solar energy is produced by Great River Energy solar resources throughout Minnesota. In 2015, wind resources accounted for 469 megawatts (MW) of total generation capacity, of which 15 MW are dedicated to the Wellspring program. Currently, Great River Energy solar resources account for nearly 2 MW of total generation capacity, of which approximately 550 kW are dedicated to the Wellspring program.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Proud Supporter of Solar Energy



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# Renewable Energy – Harnessing the power of the wind and sun

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## Is the wind or solar power supplied directly to my home?

No. The electricity generated by the wind turbines and solar panels is fed into the state's electric system, called the grid. It is like pouring a pitcher of water into a pond. You can't get the exact water molecules from the pitcher back out of the pond. The same holds true for recapturing renewable electricity from the grid. It is available to use, but to deliver the exact electron generated by wind or solar to a specific location is not possible. The wind and solar power you purchase replaces electricity that would have been generated by conventional fuels.

## Will I still receive power from conventional sources?

You will receive a mix of power sources. You won't be able to distinguish whether the electrons flowing into your home are generated by wind, solar or another resource. But, you can be assured your commitment to purchase Wellspring Wind and Solar Energy helps lessen our reliance on fossil fuels.

## What if the wind isn't blowing or the sun isn't shining? Will I still have power?

Your power will continue as usual because additional generation is built to ensure power is supplied when the wind is not blowing or the sun is not shining.

## Can we generate all our electricity from wind and solar?

No. Wind and solar are great ways to meet some of our electricity needs and are an important part of the overall mix of generation options. However, wind and solar could never generate all of our electricity needs because the wind doesn't blow, and the sun doesn't shine all the time. Quite often, wind doesn't blow at all during some of the hottest days of summer, when people are using the most electricity. And the sun doesn't shine at all at night, and the power generated from solar panels is reduced on cloudy days. Wind and solar are good options, and we need to continue to harness their power.

## Are wind and solar energy cheaper to produce than other generation options?

Not yet. Some day they may be a cheaper alternative, however, today, they are still more expensive than traditional generation methods. By providing financial incentives, the government has helped increase the growth of wind and solar energy. As technology advances and costs come down, both wind and solar become more cost competitive. Another factor is that the windiest areas are often far from the areas that need the power. Therefore, transmission lines need to be built, and this adds to the overall cost of wind energy.

## Who can participate?

To qualify for the program you must live in Dakota Electric Association's service territory.

## How can I get started?

Contact Dakota Electric to learn more about how to sign up for the Wellspring program.



### CONTACT THE ENERGY EXPERTS®

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*\*Price and program subject to change without notice.*

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