



Rise Up: Season 3, Episode 6 Transcript
“2022 Energy Fair Workshop Preview”
Featuring voices of the Just Energy Transition

[00:00:00] **Nick Hylla:** Nick here from MREA and on today's episode, we're doing something very special for you because as many of you know, June 24th to the 26th is The Energy Fair. And there's so many good things happening that what we've done is lined up a bunch of presents, speakers, musicians, and other entertainment here. And we're sharing them with you on this podcast in hopes to attract you to see all of the great things at the Fair in-person. That's at our campus in beautiful central Wisconsin, June 24th to the 26th. So without further ado, please enjoy.

[00:00:40] **Lisa Kivirist:** My name is Lisa Kivirist. Thanks for the invite to join you. My family and I run Inn Serendipity Farm in Southern Wisconsin, powered a hundred percent with renewable energy, thanks to all the education and support we've had from the MREA over decades now.

[00:00:59] And I wear, as you mentioned, different hats, including the farm, but I also am a writer with my husband, John, we've coauthored, a bunch of books in the sustainability, renewable energy, food system realm. I also work a lot with women farmers and women landowners, and advocating for sustainable agriculture, particularly in that space.

[00:01:19] My other hat too, is I work a lot and we'll be speaking about it at the Fair in the cottage food space of helping folks start food businesses from their home kitchen. And that's the book *Homemade for Sale* that John and I wrote.

[00:01:30] *Soil Sisters: Women Farmers, Empowering Change* is about exactly that of women coming together to start farms, support each other in sustainability. It's something I've been part of the community for decades now.

[00:01:45] And I've really seen both in my own farming experience and as we connect with other women of the importance of coming together. So the presentation is based on my book, *Soil Sisters*, that goes into a specifics on starting your farm. Women operate differently. We grow differently and we run businesses differently and I'd argue a good way of very much in the collaborative spirit and also wanting to reconnect with more traditional resources.

[00:02:11] Historically, the USDA actually has had lawsuits against them for discrimination against women farmers. And there's been some catch-up, but there's also a number of good resources for women to tap into and grants and education. And we'll be covering all that as well.



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[00:02:25] **Nick Hylla:** If someone comes to your presentation at the Fair, what can they expect?

[00:02:30] **Lisa Kivirist:** So for the Soul Sisters workshop, we really welcome women of all backgrounds and experiences. In particular, if there's women who may have a hidden dream about starting a farm, or maybe going back to their family farm or starting something, no matter what age, women actually make up the fastest growing group of new farmers in middle age and forties and fifties.

[00:02:51] So a very welcome, particularly again, beginning folks, we'll start with starter resources, happy to answer questions and help you on your next steps.

[00:02:59] **Nick Hylla:** And you've been coming to the Fair for quite a while. Do you want to tell us about your Fair experience?

[00:03:06] **Lisa Kivirist:** So I'm looking forward to teaching workshops at the Fair this year. Several actually. So on Friday, my husband, John Ivanco and I are doing our Sustainable Living Simplified Workshop. And this one, we had been doing it the Fair for a years and if you saw it before, come back, cause it's always different.

[00:03:24] And if this is your first time at the Fair, please come because this is the workshop that if you come to your first Fair and you feel overwhelmed by everything and all the ideas and all the workshops, which we totally did the first time we came, this is for you because this is basically our story, John and I on our farmstead in Southern Wisconsin, Inn Serendipity, and what we've done over the last 25 years.

[00:03:45] And it's sort of a timeline, so that's what I meant. Every time it's a little different because the journey continues and new things happen. And definitely new things have happened over the last two years with COVID. So that is going to be on Friday at 10 that's based too on our books, Rural Renaissance and ECOpreneuring that go into more of the details on our sustainability journey. And then at 12 o'clock John and I will be teaching Launch a Food Business from your own home kitchen.

[00:04:10] This is based on our book Homemade for Sale. And if you have a dream of starting a food business and want an easy on ramp, this is the session for you because thanks to expanding cottage food laws across the country, you



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can basically start food businesses out of your home kitchen now, which is awesome.

[00:04:27] It takes out the cost and the encumbrment of commercial kitchens and lets you hit the ground running really fast. So we're super excited because this allows us to sell things like my Latvian rye bread, to our pickles and other things out of our Wisconsin farmstead.

[00:04:41] But more importantly, it's a way to go from a hobbyist, giving you step away to a food entrepreneur and use ingredients that you care about support local farmers. And then on Saturday I'll be teaching two workshop.

[00:04:53] John will be at our booth, so you can go chat him up about, everything kilowatts. But in the meantime, I'm doing Farmstead Chef Organic Eating on a Dime on Saturday morning at 10. And that one is based on our Farmstead Chef cookbook, which basically is our story of eating out of our garden and eating frugally.

[00:05:13] And using things that are seasonal and eating year round. And it, for context, when we first moved to our farm, we hadn't planted a seed and we couldn't germinate zucchini the first year, which is incredibly embarrassing. But the short story there is if we can learn to grow all of our own food needs just about, and, uh, how do we manage the other things frugally that we do need to purchase like coffee or flour or stocking the pantry.

[00:05:37] We'll go into that in this session, including tips like making your own homemade vanilla and using a lot of substitutes in baking and cooking. So this is one of my favorite ones to lead. And, lastly on Saturday I will be teaching Soul Sisters, Women Farmers, Empowering Change. This is my hat working in the sustainable ag space, supporting new women, farmers. Women make up one of the fastest growing groups of new farmers, but we don't fit into traditional USDA check boxes, thankfully.

[00:06:05] And how can we do this in a very collaborative spirit? Because that's, what's awesome about the women farmer movement is we are doing this together. So if you have a dream of starting a farm or might be already starting and want to learn about different grants and resources available, I will be bringing the full toolkit to the soul sisters workshop based on my Soil Sisters: A Toolkit for Women Farmers book, but we'll be going into that and plenty of time to ask questions and talk amongst each other as well. And, as you probably



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sensed John and I both have a long, deep, appreciative history with the MREA Fair.

[00:06:39] We moved to the farm late 96. So it would have been 97. We knew, through our own research, that the first thing we wanted to do was install solar, thermal. And that's what we could afford at the time. And there weren't many people doing solar install. So we were very fortunate that the mighty Bob Graham Lowe one of the founders of the MREA came down from Stevens Point to our farmstead in Southern Wisconsin and installed it for us.

[00:07:03] But more than that, he installed in us a love for the MREA and the fact that we can just keep learning. And he invited us to the Fair. He literally invited us to-- this was before camping at the MREA, but back when it was at the county Fairgrounds, some folks remember-- he invited us to camp on his farm and was he and his wife, Margarite were so generous in inviting us.

[00:07:23] And that's what the Fair's all about. You probably are coming because somebody told you about it. And we've been coming literally, ever since. We missed it during the COVID hiatus, but we've been doing various presentations along the way. Our son, Liam, actually, he's 20 now it's his first year. He's not at the Fair cause you know, he's a young adult with things to do, but basically grew up coming to the Fair.

[00:07:43] It's been a family tradition for us. We lived in Rainbow's End for many years and it's, it's a summer tradition that we are excited to have back and see all of you and meet a lot of new folks. And hopefully it'll be part of your year, decades, long tradition someday. Soon to thank you.

[00:07:58] We'll be right back with more of the rise up podcast. But first we'd like to take a moment to thank our sponsors of the 2022 Madison and Milwaukee bus shuttles to the 31st Annual Energy Fair. The Sierra Club John Muir chapter, Wisconsin's voice for the largest, oldest and most influential grassroots environmental organization inspired by Wisconsin's beautiful lakes, forest rivers, and other natural features. Working together to protect our communities and the planet [sierraclub.org/wisconsin](https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin).

[00:08:28] And Grow Solar, a coordinated effort among the Midwest organizations and municipalities to open an advantageous solar market that provides long-term benefits to communities. Grow Solar makes investments in solar faster, easier, and more affordable [grow solar.org](https://www.grow-solar.org).



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[00:08:43] You can view the arrival and departure schedule and reserve your space on the Madison or Milwaukee shuttle for free theenergyfair.org. And now back to the Rise Up podcast.

[00:08:53]

[00:08:55] **Christopher LaForge:** I'm a lifetime member. My name's Christopher LaForge I've run Great Northern Solar, shameless self-promotion, for 30, almost 33 years, 32 years, and have been, a member and a volunteer with the group since our inception. It's been a joy to be involved with, such a hardy group. I helped found the Institute where we started training.

[00:09:24] I helped develop the initial curriculum from photovoltaics. This was all while I was doing design engineering, installation, and promotion of solar systems. And, and we've seen those just a tremendous result. I have moved from being, you know, everything from a wholesaler of equipment and trainer and a designer, installer and trainer to just being a certified master trainer.

[00:09:55] I'm certified by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council as a, as a master trainer in the area of photovoltaic technology. And I also am a NABCEP certified photovoltaic installation professional emeritus, which is such a great term because people say, oh, well, that sounds cool, that's interesting, and he's great.

[00:10:16] So he's old and it also means I don't get on roofs much anymore unless I own it, which is really nice.

[00:10:23] You know, when I started, I did a lot of training for contractors and then this guy, Nick Hylla showed up and, and he helped start the solar instructor training network.

[00:10:33] And I got involved in that. We trained all these other instructors. And so they're doing most of the basic instructing and I've just had to float up to the of where you teach administrators and engineers and more advanced DPCs on how to do bigger and better solar things. And we're doing so many great things we're really taking over, which is kind of exciting for the utilities.

[00:10:55] Ha and, uh, and they're all getting on board or leaving, and most of them are getting on board and it's just been a fantastic thing. I wanted to congratulate everybody at the MREA especially all our hardworking staff and



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leadership and board, because it is the most long lived nonprofit group I've ever worked with or volunteered with.

[00:11:15] And we are tremendous.

[00:11:18] **Nick Hylla:** Well, that's a great introduction, Chris, and a good segue into your workshop that we're featuring, which I believe you've titled the Many Levels of Solar Plus Storage. Would you just say that title again and then talk about the workshop and what people can expect?

[00:11:35] **Christopher LaForge:** The many levels of solar and storage is an extended workshop, which is a, that means in our MREA terms, it costs a little money and it's, it's a three hour workshop in depth into how we employ energy storage with photovoltaic and, or other renewable energy systems. This course is designed primarily for the residential user and contractor and maybe small commercial user and contractor. It goes very in depth into how we design systems, starting with the loads and the photovoltaic array, and then build in storage in a way that, takes advantage of the new technology.

[00:12:23] And also understands the older technologies and where they're useful still, usually for budgetary reasons, because they're less expensive than the lithium-ion technology. As you can see from my introduction, I'm the master of the long answer. So we give a lot of time for questions and he take a lot of time for answers.

[00:12:41] So people that come to the course will get, as a user, if you're on the, on the user end of this technology, you'll get a lot information to be an intelligent user and someone that can employ solar plus storage to the greatest advantage that you can do both, environmentally, which is my main interest.

[00:13:01] And then of course, what gets the job done is economically how you can make more and more money and pay less and less money for electricity because we're winning the day our, our technologies to doing fantastic things have bringing costs down and you know, this small weekend project we have of saving the planet from catastrophe.

[00:13:19] Also, I'm teaching one other class on a volunteer basis for the professional level. And this moves into whew utility and industrial and community, energy, solar and storage. This class will be for, energy professionals. It's kind of a higher end course. We're going to talk about the history of large scale storage.



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[00:13:40] What is making up most of the large scale storage now and how we do bigger and better energy storage to provide the same kind of benefits and more for utilities and municipalities. It's the sort of course that for nerds, they're going to get in really deep into the weeds on how we build a grid.

[00:14:00] That's intelligent, how we electrify our economy and still be able to do it cleanly and how we, basically change the entire utility business model, whether the utilities like it or not, which for me is just the funnest thing. They like it because I'm from the Midwest and we are friendly.

[00:14:25] **Nick Hylla:** Well, thanks, Chris.

[00:14:25] That all sounds really exciting. You've been coming to the Fair for a long, long time. What are some of your favorite things to do at the Fair?

[00:14:32] **Christopher LaForge:** At the Fair? We have such a compendium of courses. I, in the past, I volunteered more individual courses and I never had time to take them. But what I like to do now that I just do two courses is I like to run around and take in as many workshops as possible.

[00:14:48] We have tremendous amount of workshops. I like, the point at about four in the day. If I'm not teaching that I get to go to the tent that offers some of the finest microbrew, as possible and visit with all my friends. Because my partner and I've been coming to the Fair since the first Fair, where we volunteered parking cars. Oh, it's been a home town reunion.

[00:15:21] And so we get together and we get to see all sorts of people, of all levels of the industry in this park, like a Fair like environment that is just Midwestern, kick the tires and have some fun.

[00:15:34] **Nick Hylla:** That was really great. And, we're looking forward to seeing it. Do you have any parting words?

[00:15:42] **Christopher LaForge:** Right. I hope everybody that can, can take the time and come to this Fair.

[00:15:46] This is the least expensive informational event you can come to on the planet. We're going to have more information and not only is there information, but a good portion of the Fairgrounds is dedicated to vendors. So you can go ahead and kick the tires and see real products on the ground to talk to real installers who are doing real work.



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[00:16:05] And unlike a lot of conferences, you could come in and leave with the knowledge necessary to, get your system done on your business or your dwelling. And I want to make sure that everybody that even has a passing thought of it gets there. And if the only day you can get there is Saturday, we have the coolest keynote on Saturday, but each day we've got good keynotes and we've got a lot of great food onsite.

[00:16:31] So you don't have to worry about eating and just come and participate.

[00:16:35]

[00:16:38] **Amanda Haffele:** I'm Amanda Haffele. I am the Solid Waste Director for Portage County Solid Waste. We oversee a closed landfill, a recycling facility, and a transfer facility. And then we also have a household hazardous waste program.

[00:16:52] **Nick Hylla:** Great, so you deal with, all of the waste streams from Portage County. And you're going to talk about that, in a presentation at the Energy Fair.

[00:17:00] Do you want to, give us your presentation title and talk about what your presentation will entail?

[00:17:05] **Amanda Haffele:** So, Recycling Right. Here in Portage County and all over Wisconsin, it's confusing of what we can recycle and what we can't recycle. And so part of my job as director here, I work directly with the mills and the buyers of the materials.

[00:17:20] So to figure out exactly what they want and what is actually being recycled. So I'm going to break hearts during this presentation to let residents know that, Hey, this stuff is not recyclable. And then give some tips and tricks about how to sort your stuff better, how to package your material and your recycling bins, so that it's less costly in the long run to process it and sell it to buyers.

[00:17:43] Recycling correctly is very important at our facility, bags and unbroken down boxes can hide things such as sharps, broken glass or other non-recyclable. Non-recyclable scrap metal items can damage our equipment, caused shutdowns. Things can tangle around our equipment or get stuck on our magnet and break our magnet.



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[00:18:05] So recycling right is very important. It reduces labor, it reduces our costs, and then it makes recycling even cheaper in the long run. We have better profits and more recyclable material.

[00:18:15] **Nick Hylla:** And I think what I remember from our tour is that kind of recycling and what is recyclable varies from place to place, or are you going to talk about kind of like how, what we recycle Portage County, maybe the differences from other counties?

[00:18:32] **Amanda Haffele:** In all of Wisconsin, there are mandatory recyclable items. So they're not going to change wherever you are in Wisconsin. And there are certain areas such as Portage County, where we can recycle our yogurt containers and sour cream containers. And then there's parts like Outagamie County that can do cartons.

[00:18:47] So I will touch on what I know. And then it's always best to check with that municipality, if something can for sure be recycled or not.

[00:18:55] **Nick Hylla:** Great and Amanda, have you been to the Energy Fair before?

[00:18:59] **Amanda Haffele:** Yes, I love the Energy Fair. The music is I think my favorite part. I like to boogie, and I have kindred spirits there that like to dance with me.

[00:19:10] So I love it.

[00:19:12] **Nick Hylla:** So recycle during the day party at night? Yes.

[00:19:17]

[00:19:20] **Sam Dunaiski:**

[00:19:20] I'm Sam, I am the Distributed Resources Director here at RENEW Wisconsin. RENEW is a renewable energy advocacy organization. We do renewable energy policy work, legislative work, and kind of general, program and education work as well around the state of Wisconsin.

[00:19:40] I've been here for almost four years now, certainly four years at the time of the Fair and I manage our distributed programs. So a lot of behind the



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meter solar programs, and some other policy initiatives as well on the distributed resources side of things.

[00:19:57] So we are going to be, I am going to be presenting along with, one or two colleagues, Clean Energy Toolkit for Local Governments. You know, we've seen sadly with the absence of, of, larger, you know, state and federal government inaction that, cities, counties, municipalities, have really taken the lead over the last few years on renewable energy implementation and, and carbon goals and things like that.

[00:20:24] So, what we're going to do is we're going to provide a tool kit, or I liked sports analogies, so we're going to provide a playbook for, local governments that, that want to do more. And, you know, we've, like I said, we've already seen a lot. You know, smaller government organizations, doing a lot of things and that's because, you know, they provide services or they have public facilities and things like that, and their constituents want these things.

[00:20:50] So, not only is there, is there sort of a reason to, you know, to decarbonize and things like that, but, but they also have the ability to do that as well. So what we want to do, like I said, is we want to just drop a playbook, because there are, different levels where, where different local governments are at. Some people, some local governments are just at the starting line.

[00:21:13] Some are much, much further along, and there's a vast majority that are somewhere within that spectrum. So what we're going to do is we're going to basically, give a lay of the land, let those representatives know, what kind of game they're playing. Are they playing checkers or are they playing chess?

[00:21:31] And then we're going to talk about ways they can get started ways they can, you know, reduce their carbon and ways they can reduce their energy. Some other ways that they can decarbonize and transportation and, and, and finance projects and, and the whole gambit. And we're going to be, you know, just kind of gauging where folks are at and we'll have a different hopefully playbook for everybody to follow.

[00:21:55] There are certain, government entities within the state that have already, done a lot. And we're hoping that, we can provide sort of some peer to peer mentoring for, for organizations or for governments that aren't so far along, to just to make it easier for them and, and so they can reach their goals, without , having to reinvent the wheel every single time through.



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[00:22:14] **Nick Hylla:** What can people expect if they come and visit you at your booth at end?

[00:22:19] **Sam Dunaiski:** Yeah, we have lots of fun literature. If you're, if you're a reader, you can read on all sorts of renewable energy policies and programs and just general information, on whether it be solar, wind batteries, electric vehicles, you name it.

[00:22:35] We have a lot of folks that are very well known and well versed in their own subject matter. And, the Fair, I definitely can say, from, from a RENEW staff perspective is, is one of our favorite outings of the year. So we really like to talk to folks about, especially the, the policies and the, and the other regulatory and legislative matters around renewable energy as well.

[00:22:58] **Nick Hylla:** Yeah, so you've been to the Fair few times. What are you looking forward to this year Sam?

[00:23:02] **Sam Dunaiski:** Oh, I'm looking forward to the fact that the Fair is happening. It's been awhile and, I'm, I'm sure I'm not the only one who's saying that, but yeah, I'm just really excited to, to get out and, and see real human faces again and talk to real human humans again.

[00:23:17] Right, I don't have one particular thing, honestly, I just am really excited that it's happening again and, and, and that we get to get together and gather and, and learn more and talk more about renewable energy.

[00:23:30] **Nick Hylla:**

[00:23:31] One, thing that RENEW does, I know you're presenting on the local government toolkit, but one particular program that you offer that I think jurisdictions can really benefit from as far as helping their local residents go solar is the Solar for Good program that you manage. Do you want to talk about Solar for Good a little bit.

[00:23:49] **Sam Dunaiski:** Yeah, Solar for Good is a program that we run for nonprofits across the state. So if you're any kind of NGO you can apply for a grant with us that helps with some of the upfront costs of going solar. We just closed on our most recent funding round.

[00:24:07] I'm happy to say that we had our best funding round to date. Typically we get about 20 grant applications. This year we got 46. So we really



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had a great year, and it really is a testament to, sort of the communal aspect of solar. The program has already done, I think, it's about 4.3 megawatts now of solar on non-profit, , facilities and entities across the state.

[00:24:33] At one point that was almost 1% of all of the solar installed in Wisconsin. So, the program is, is done really well. And that's thanks to just so many people from the community kind of banding together and working on this. So we'll have information on that as well. We've helped nonprofits from, housing providers to animal shelters, to veterans groups, to houses of worship go solar.

[00:24:58] And basically there's, there's a little something for everyone in there. So, hopefully, you know, we're all involved, generally to some degree with a nonprofit, whether it be through work or through our, our private life, a lot of times both. And, it it's, it's good to know that we can provide that information out there to the folks who are looking for it.

[00:25:17]

[00:25:20] **Amber Westerman:** Hi, I'm Amber Westerman. I've been coming to the Fair for about 10 years now, and I've been a presenter of workshops for about that same amount of time.

[00:25:30] I give workshops on design topics and this year I have three workshops which are focused on my latest project, which is the first net zero energy house that was built in my small town, just west of Madison in Spring Green, Wisconsin. It's a 1200 square foot house, super insulated, with a double wall construction and is so far 50% better than net zero with my solar panels.

[00:25:57] So the workshops that I'm giving this year are, the first one is How I Built a Net Zero Energy House. And that's just going to be a big overview over the whole construction process from choosing a lot, all the way through, living here for two years and reviewing my energy bills. The second workshop is How to Minimize Construction Waste.

[00:26:18] And this is, really the core of my focus in my, my, my business, which is to build small and build sustainably and build with a renewable and natural materials. So this is about how to avoid having a construction dumpster, which is usually a fixture on every new home build. I did not use a construction dumpster at all and was able to handle my waste from the construction in small batches.



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[00:26:46] I had some successes and some failures. I'll be going over that and also some resources for people to use as they go forward with their project. And then the third workshop is called a Barrier Free and Non-toxic Home Explained. And, I use, again, this house that I built two years ago as an example of an accessible house.

[00:27:07] In other words, wide doorways, no thresholds showers, et cetera. So it's an aging in place designed home as well as using materials that are, non-toxic like without formaldehyde, low toxic paint or actually organic paint. So these are the issues that I think more and more people are going to be interested in going forward, especially those with some health issues that they want to have both an accessible house and also a house that does not have indoor air pollution.

[00:27:37] **Nick Hylla:** Great, so you've obviously been to the Fair before. What's your favorite part of the Fair, some of the favorite things that you like to do it.

[00:27:46] **Amber Westerman:** I love the camping. And my favorite part is I always take my bike. So I camp in the back 40, which is the campground that MREA has. And I take my bike and I bike back and forth between the fairgrounds and the campgrounds, usually two or three times a day.

[00:28:03] And that is just, just a great experience. I also like taking the bus and it's so easy to meet people at the Fair, like on the bus, going from campground to the fairgrounds, at the lunches at the networking dinner, at the other dinners, people are always very friendly and welcoming and have a story that's interesting to hear what brought them to the Fair. So I think the social aspect of it is what I like the best.

[00:28:30] **Nick Hylla:** Cool, and, uh, I guess one more question. Did you get an article published in a Fine Home Building magazine? All right. You want to talk about the article you got published.

[00:28:41] **Amber Westerman:** Yeah, so a lot of people might not know, Fine Home Building is kind of one of those very niche magazines that people in my world that is like the top, top shelf magazine to get into. And, so this was really a, a lifetime or a career long goal for me to get a major piece published in that magazine.



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[00:29:02] It's also on their online content and, I worked with the editors to come up with the right type of article that they were looking for, which includes partly my personal story, my personal journey, building this house, as well as going into a deep dive with all the technical high-performance details.

[00:29:20] So I think they did a great job with the illustrations, the photographs, and a nice balance between the story and the why, the why I did it as well as how I did it.

[00:29:30] Well, that's really exciting, and, we will see at the Fair and I'm hoping to attend some of your workshops. I'm really curious about your house. It sounds absolutely wonderful in Spring Green.

[00:29:39] Well, thank you. Thanks, Nick. I look forward to seeing you there.

[00:29:42]

[00:29:45] **Jeremy Solin:** I'm Jeremy Solin, I am the co-owner of Tapped Maple Syrup, which is a infused barrel aged and a pure maple syrup business that's based on our family land up in Langlade County. And I also worked for UW Madison division of extension as the maple syrup program coordinator. So I support maple syrup production in the state.

[00:30:08] And my background, obviously I do some maple syrup and, grew up doing that and then also have an education in natural resources, ecology background.

[00:30:17] So I actually get to do two presentations, which I'm excited about.

[00:30:21] It's been a little while since I presented at the Fair and, the first one is going to focus on essentially like beginner, maple syrup production. So it kind of getting started with tapping trees, going through the process, the cooking of it, preparing of it, all, all of that. And then the other presentation will focus more on kind of the business side of things of, kind of background of tapped and how tapped has been developed primarily from the value added products side.

[00:30:49] And, the, again, the more kind of financial business aspects of, of building, building that business.



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[00:30:56] **Nick Hylla:** So what, what can somebody who attends your workshops expect to learn or be involved in.

[00:31:03] **Jeremy Solin:** Yeah so for the beginner maple syrup, one, it's really like how to get started if you're interested, whether you have, you know, one tree or, you know, 500 trees that you're interested in tapping, uh, you could get the basics of how to go about that.

[00:31:18] So equipment to use the process of tapping, considerations of preparing maple syrup, all of those kinds of things. And then, for the other one on the business side, I think it's, primarily about like considerations of building a small family business and kind of the considerations you need to have to kind of distinguish yourself, do effective marketing, develop products in a way that set you apart from, you know, the, the commodity, products and, essentially get some ideas of, of what you might be able to do to start a startup business of your own.

[00:31:56] **Nick Hylla:**

[00:31:57] Great, and it's not all just business with your workshops, right? You in the true spirit of the edutainment event of the Fair you are also hosting a happy hour with Tapped Maple Syrup. Do you want to talk to us about, uh, what's what that's all about?

[00:32:13] Yeah,

[00:32:14] **Jeremy Solin:** maybe I don't have a ton of details on that, but, so we're, we're hosting, a happy hour along with Siren Shrub Company. So combination of Siren and, and Tapped. And so what I, what I know is that we're going to make some good drinks, that will feature Siren Shrubs and, uh, some of our infused maple syrup and we're actually releasing a new maple syrup, just at about the time the Energy Fair, happens..

[00:32:44] And one of those cocktails will have that new syrup. And so we're excited to get, to get to share it at...

[00:32:50] **Nick Hylla:** It's a secret. So you can't tell us

[00:32:52] **Jeremy Solin:** I can't tell you until then!



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[00:32:57] **Nick Hylla:** Awesome, and, you've, you've been in the Fair before.

[00:33:00] **Jeremy Solin:** I have been to the Fair. I used to spend a lot of time at the Fair, and less, so the last couple of years, just out of, you know, the craziness of life, but super excited to be there.

[00:33:11] I love the Fair, it's an amazing community event, always, lots of amazing events going on and good people. And I'm excited to see people I haven't seen in a while there and I get to learn some new things, so yeah, happy, happy to be, to get to go back.

[00:33:27] **Nick Hylla:** Great, and , if you're interested in learning about, maple syrup and, starting your own personal or business tapping or starting a business or trying a unique drink or being present for the privileged release of a new maple syrup, the Energy Fairs place to be.

[00:33:45] Perfectly summarized!

[00:33:46]

[00:33:49] **Mindy McCord:** Good morning, thanks for having me. So I am Mindy McCord. I am the co-founder of Siren Shrub Company. We are a women owned Wisconsin based beverage company that makes something called a shrub.

[00:34:00] A shrub is actually a drink from the colonial time. So it's from the 1800s, it's just three ingredients. It's organic apple cider vinegar, organic cane sugar, or maple syrup and a fruit root or herbs. So we make a concentrate and people take it home and they splash it into whatever they're drinking. So it gives a really nice complex, delicious taste without the alcohol, but you can also add alcohol to shrub drinks and they're awesome.

[00:34:23] We have five different flavors. We have a tart cherry, a basil, a honeycrisp, maple ginger and lemon grass. And in every bottle we partner with a Wisconsin farm. So that also adds to the flavor being amazing and awesome.

[00:34:39] I'm biased, but I think it's true. My favorite is the tart cherry by far. I think it's the most versatile of the bunch. It can really pair well with anything you already love. So it doesn't take a lot of thought to figure out how to use it. And then we also have these, canned ready to drink products because shrubs are a super education, heavy product.



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[00:34:58] So these ready to drinks are shrub already mixed with sparkling water. You can just crack them open and enjoy them any time, any place. And we think they're super approachable for folks that are a little unsure about what it means to drink vinegar.

[00:35:09] We are partnering with Tapped Maple Syrup to do, two pop-up happy hour, mocktail events. One night we'll be Tapped Maple Syrup, and one night we'll be Siren Shrub but we'll be using our products together.

[00:35:21] Expect to be blown away by delicious flavor. And we are going to talk to you and teach you a little about what it means to mix up mocktails easily and with ingredients that are, that are local to us.

[00:35:33] **Nick Hylla:** Have you been to the Fair before?

[00:35:35] **Mindy McCord:** Of course I have. I have vended and attended at the Energy Fair.

[00:35:39] **Nick Hylla:** And what's some of your favorite things about the Energy Fair.

[00:35:42] **Mindy McCord:** I love the derby race car event. I'm not sure what that's called exactly. And also just the energy, no pun intended, but the energy that is at the Energy Fair. It's just a lot of lovely people coming together around common causes and there is so much to see and do, and the weather always seems to be really great.

[00:36:02] So knock on wood.

[00:36:04] **Nick Hylla:** Well, great Mindy. I'm excited to see you at the Fair and learn how to make a lovely, mocktail with a Siren , beverage.

[00:36:13] **Mindy McCord:** Awesome, thanks, looking forward to seeing you.

[00:36:15]

[00:36:18] **Huda Alkaff:** I greet you with an Islamic greeting, salaam-Alaikum, peace be with you. I'm Huda Alkaff. I'm the founder and director of Wisconsin Green Muslims. I'm an ecologist, an environmental educator. Wisconsin Green Muslims is a grassroots environmental justice group that connects faith,



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environmental justice, sustainability, and healing through education and service since 2005.

[00:36:42] And so we are celebrating 17 years this year and we are, uh, we work on many issues, primarily education around climate change, water, food, solar energy, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and transportation equity.

[00:36:57] **Nick Hylla:** Thank you Huda! Happy anniversary, 17 years. That's wonderful. And you're presenting at, the Energy Fair, on Sunday, June 26th.

[00:37:08] Would you like to tell us about your presentation?

[00:37:11] **Huda Alkaff:** Yeah, we've been coordinating the Wisconsin Faith Communities for Equitable Solar Initiative for now, well, since 2016, actually, that's when it started. And we now connect with over close to 8,000, people Wisconsinites from 19 different faith traditions spiritualities, our mission is really to, advance just solar through building interfaith relationships.

[00:37:41] And we, through our connections with, our interfaith partners, we really landed into two pathways. One is solar trainings to jobs, good jobs. And the other one is energy efficiency to solar. So energy efficiency first, and that leads to solar. We are an environmental justice so we definitely center our environmental justice principles.

[00:38:06] So we're going to be talking about our work. As I mentioned over the years, how we center our faith, our interfaith collaborations and the environmental justice principles as we move towards these initiatives that we are talking about and how we address climate injustice and environmental injustice.

[00:38:30] **Nick Hylla:** So if a participant comes to your workshop, what can they expect, whether it'd be a conversation, a lecture, and what kind of information will you be presenting?

[00:38:39] **Huda Alkaff:** We'll go through just storytelling around how really what's the unifying message. What's the unifying power of solar and energy it's really brings us together.

[00:38:50] And it's the light. So we're going to talk about the comments and we're going to talk about our value. And how this really benefited many communities and how we can move together. So it's primarily some storytelling,



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some sharing from the heart, but also enjoying the shine of the lights and the comments, and then how we can proceed together to make things better for, for all of us.

[00:39:17] Now, here in Wisconsin, in the Midwest and nationally, especially benefiting from all the things that are happening policy-wise and, environmental justice, with Justice 40 Initiative and how to prioritize and center these communities that have been disadvantaged for so long.

[00:39:38] And so how we can center them in our work moving forward.

[00:39:43] **Nick Hylla:** Well, that's very promising, inspiring. Huda you've been to the Fair before, what, what do you like about coming to the Fair? What are you looking forward to?

[00:39:51] **Huda Alkaff:** Well, I'm looking for the outdoors, definitely connecting with people. It's definitely very energizing, very inspiring, and, just enjoy the different, state of the arts, entrepreneurship, ideas that are out there and how it can generate more ideas moving forward.

[00:40:09] And so that connection, that networking, and then just sharing where we are and what we hope to do together. So that's something I'm really looking forward to that.

[00:40:20] **Nick Hylla:** Great, me too. I will see you in person, at the Fair, June 24th to the 26th. Huda, is there any thing you'd like to leave us with? Any parting words?

[00:40:30] **Huda Alkaff:** I'm a board member of the Midwest Renewable Energy Association. I'm really happy to be a member for so many years.

[00:40:37] Wisconsin Green Muslim has been a member of, for so many years. So really looking forward to come together and, with the advisory board, with all the members and just see how we can chart a way forward with all the promising, advantages.

[00:40:53] And, as I mentioned, ideas and, innovations. So we can move forward together.



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[00:41:00] **Nick Hylla:** Well, thank you so much Huda that was very positive and I look forward to seeing you. Thank you.

[00:41:05]

[00:41:08] **Jordan Kaiser:** My name is Jordan Kaiser. I lead the design and sales department at North Wind Solar here in Amherst, Wisconsin. I've been working in renewable energy for now about, 12 years plus or minus a few. I've got a couple of degrees in renewable energy locally from Mid-State Technical College. I've worked with a couple different renewable energy companies, but I've been with North Wind Solar since, the winter of 2013, 2014.

[00:41:35] So, nearly about eight and a half years or so. We here at North Wind design and install solar power systems, everything from small residential systems to, mid to large commercial projects as well. The last few years, we've also done a lot with solar plus storage systems, particularly in, primarily with Tesla Powerwall.

[00:41:59] So we, we work with a few different brands from solar modules to inverters, to batteries. But, past that we are a worker owned cooperative, back in 2017, we transitioned to become a worker cooperative and saw it as a more democratic way to do business and really empower each one of our employees and has really served us well.

[00:42:18] I think not only for us as a company, but, out there in the community as we're installing systems. So, yeah, that's sort of a overhead view of

[00:42:25] **Nick Hylla:** us.

[00:42:26] And you're presenting and exhibiting at the Fair. Do you want to talk about your presentation.

[00:42:31] **Jordan Kaiser:** Yeah, absolutely. We, we've been exhibiting there and had, have had a booth there for a while, as long as I've been with the company.

[00:42:38] And even years prior to that, I think probably since we started as a company back in 2007, we've had a presence at the Energy Fair and it's just been just a fantastic opportunity for us. Not only to generate business, but to network with folks in our industry and, and really just have a good time over the course of three or four days.



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[00:42:54] But I myself will be making a presentation Saturday at 11. And my presentation will be on solar plus storage systems for homes and businesses. And, it's going to lean more towards frequently asked questions and some of the design considerations for both the solar and storage part of the system, how to perform for your home or business.

[00:43:16] And won't get too deep into technical aspects of, of equipment, but certainly can touch on some of those details as well. But really my intent is to give, you know, some exposure to folks, to an introduction to folks, about how battery backup systems can play a part in their grid tied solar PV systems.

[00:43:33] So again, that'll be, Saturday at 11:00 AM. I forget the tent color, but, I think MREA has provided me with a very good opportunity at a prime presentation spot on Saturday morning. So I'm thankful, thankful for that.

[00:43:46] **Nick Hylla:** Good Jordan, I'm excited to see that presentation. And you also have an exhibit, and so what can people expect when they stop by your booth?

[00:43:55] **Jordan Kaiser:** Yeah, you know, we have a few different representatives from our company that'll be at our booth. With everyone from our sales department, to a couple of people in operations, our CEO floats in and out of the, our booth as well. And really our intent with our booth has always been to be sort of a welcoming area.

[00:44:13] And not so much about giving a pen or a, you know, giving something away, but, allowing folks to come in and feel welcome to come in and have a conversation and ask questions. And, whether they've been thinking about installing a system for their house or they're just looking, you know to learn a little more, we really wanted it to be, and I've always intended it to be a welcoming space for that.

[00:44:33] So we're excited to be back at the Fair and, and, and have those conversations with fair-goers once

[00:44:38] **Nick Hylla:** again.

[00:44:38] So you've been working with the MREA as part of our Grow Solar Initiative, which is a solar group buy program. And you've won the bid for central Wisconsin a number of years in a row, including this year. And that



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group buy program will be open during the Fair and available to residents of central Wisconsin counties.

[00:44:58] Do you want to talk about how that group buy program?

[00:45:01] **Jordan Kaiser:** Yeah, absolutely. We're, we're very excited to be, chosen as the installer for the Grow Solar program once again. It's been a fantastic way for folks in the surrounding area to get solar on the rooftop and in a cost-effective way. And really the idea is to gather as many folks together, to install solar on their homes and, and based on that amount of participation and based on that total capacity of folks who sign onto the program, we provide a discounted price on their system, as well as an end of program rebates.

[00:45:32] So it gives a little more incentive for folks, to, to get solar on their home and, and really with costs of everything rising these days, it provides an opportunity to shave a little bit of that cost off and open up a window and an opportunity to get solar for their home. So it's, it's been a fantastic program over the years to get, , literally hundreds of folks to, to put solar on their homes and, and we're excited for that opportunity to be made again.

[00:45:59] And so I believe the first power hour seminar seminars begin sometime mid June, and we'll carry on through the better part of the summer. And we'll be attending a lot of those live events and be there to answer and address questions and talk a little more about systems and how they play a part for their homes and businesses.

[00:46:15] So, yeah, it's an exciting.

[00:46:18] **Nick Hylla:** Great Jordan, and what are you looking forward to at the Energy Fair this year?

[00:46:22] **Jordan Kaiser:** Ah, yeah, I'm looking forward to a lot, you know, it's, it'd be great to reconnect with some industry partners and friends and, and just sort of, get the pulse on what other companies are doing.

[00:46:32] We, as a company we're always looking to learn, especially from folks that work in our industry and our state industry, as well as in the Midwest, and, and always looking to improve as a company. So that's always been a really good, aspect of, of the Fair that I look forward to. You can't beat the food.



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[00:46:46] There's a lot of good places to, to get some local food, as well as some beverages. So yeah, you know, overall, I think I'm excited for, the reconnection to, to, friends and, and folks in the industry, that we haven't had in the last couple of years.

[00:46:59]

[00:47:02] **Jared Schumacker:** So my name is Jared Schumacher. I live here in Madison, Wisconsin, and I work for Third Coast Advisors as a financial advisor.

[00:47:10] So if I had to boil it down to the most simplest thing is we really help people make smart financial decisions. So, you know, if you really think about all the things that are involved in, in your life, when it comes to finances. So, you know, typically it's you know, retirement 401k through your job or property and casualty insurance person or a real estate person, a tax attorney, a CPA, all of those people are involved in your life and finances in some way.

[00:47:36] And it's, they don't talk to each other about your finances very often. So in a lot of ways, it's up to you to come up with a financial plan that makes sense, going through. And that's kind of where we help is we jump in the middle and we help our clients work through all of that and make sure that they have a path

[00:47:51] **Nick Hylla:** going through.

[00:47:51] So you have a presentation at the Energy Fair, Invest With Your Values. Do you want to just say the title of your presentation and what it'll be about?

[00:48:00] **Jared Schumacker:** Yeah, so Invest With Your Values. It's been obviously much more in the news over the past few years, but really, sustainable investing, ESG investing, it's got obviously a plethora of different names. There there's been a lot of, just different ways of looking at it and a lot of information from a lot of different sources and a lot of people just don't really know where to go or where to find out or what it's really all about, and this is going to be more educational.

[00:48:27] So to really just kind of give people, a look at what investing with your values really looks like. So we'll go over topics such as like where they can invest. So the different types of accounts that are available to them, what ESG



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or sustainable investing is about, where we are today, you know, where, where we've been, why they should do something and when then finally what they can do.

[00:48:48] And then obviously we'll have an opportunity for people to ask questions and, you know, cause everybody's, you know, situation would be different. So if they have specific questions on, on different topics, you know, cause ESG has been around for you know, in the form that it's in now, for about 20 years or so, but there's, there's been a lot of changes, especially as of late. The SEC is doing some really interesting things, even now as we speak so..

[00:49:13] **Nick Hylla:** Great, have you been to the Energy Fair? I

[00:49:16] **Jared Schumacker:** have. So I moved back to Wisconsin a couple of years ago and I went for the first time in 2019 I'd never heard of it before. And I, and I loved it when it was there, it was, it was really cool and, and, and a place to go.

[00:49:28] A friend of mine told me about it and he said, Hey, let's go. So we came up there on a Sunday. We didn't get there until I think like one o'clock on Sunday. So it wasn't open for very long, but, then I was just like, you know what, I'm going to come up here next year in 2020 and I'm going to spend like all day Saturday here, or at least a couple hours on Saturday and then look what happened.

[00:49:47] I wasn't able to. So I'm, I'm super stoked and really excited that you guys are bringing it back in person and, you know, we get to, get to all meet each other and talk and talk about different ideas and what everybody else has got going on. And hopefully we can, you know, network with each other and benefit all.

[00:50:04]

[00:50:07] **Andrew Lewandowski:** My name is Andrew Lewandowski. I'm a general pediatrician who works on the east side of Madison, and I do a lot of work in climate and health, and I am part of two 501(c)(3) organizations, two non-profits one is that Wisconsin Health Professionals for Climate Action, and then also the Wisconsin Environmental Health Network.

[00:50:26] Talking about the two organizations that I work with on a somewhat regular basis, there's the Wisconsin Health Professionals for Climate Action.



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That is an organization that is dedicated to, equitable climate change solutions, both mitigation and adaptation solutions.

[00:50:41] And there are a lot of different ways in which we advocate for those equitable climate justice solutions. And then the Wisconsin Environmental Health Network also does work within the climate spheres, but then they also have, a number of health professionals who focus on things like endocrine disruptor, chemicals, or other environmental toxicants, things like lead, et cetera, that also have the potential to affect our health because we know that, things like climate change and, and there are, there are many environmental determinants of health and not necessarily just the, not necessarily just the choices that we make from day to day.

[00:51:12] I'm really excited to, present at Custer this year about the health benefits of electric vehicles.

[00:51:18] There are a lot of benefits that you can gain from it. But, I think in general electric vehicles, just like many other. Well, I should say in our transportation in general, we know, is a big source of pollutants and can cause, a number of health hazards as can, combustion of other fossil fuels or even emission of climate pollutants.

[00:51:37] Even if it doesn't come from fossil fuels, but you have direct effects on health from the burning of fossil fuels, but then you also have the climate change component. There are about nine different ways that climate change is harming people. And it disproportionately hurts some populations more than others.

[00:51:52] And so, even though I'll just be talking about how electric vehicles will help to solve part of that equation, there are a lot of ways in which climate change is affecting the health of our families, our, our kids, our friends, our neighbors communities.

[00:52:05] **Nick Hylla:** Great, and have you been to the Energy Fair before?

[00:52:08] **Andrew Lewandowski:** I have not, I have wanted to, for a number of years, I'm excited to go for the first time I have three small children and so it is difficult to, to get away on a weekend, but I look forward to it. I've actually been up to Custer, you know, close to when the Energy Fair was going to happen. They were actually even setting up tents and everything at that point.



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[00:52:28] But, but this'll be my first time.

[00:52:30] **Nick Hylla:** Good, you know, we are a very family friendly event, so you're welcome to bring the whole family. And we have a whole bunch of family activities, including, reptiles and kids music and aerial dancing and all types of things. And I think we're installing a bunch of hammocks and a sandbox for kids to play in.

[00:52:47] **Andrew Lewandowski:** Well, that sounds awesome. I'm I'm sorry I missed out then maybe it'll become a family tradition.

[00:52:52] **Nick Hylla:** Well, good. I hope so. Well, is there anything else you'd like to leave us with today?

[00:52:57] **Andrew Lewandowski:** Sure, I mean, I think the main thing that as health professionals, we want people to know is that climate change, isn't just this polar bear on a melting iceberg somewhere, but that, climate change and, the way in which our environment is changing is affecting our health.

[00:53:11] We tend to think about climate changes and environmental crisis, and it is, it's absolutely an environmental crisis, but it accelerates and it amplifies human diseases. And that comes from things like extreme heat, extreme weather. Air pollution increases and what we call vector-borne diseases like ticker mosquito-borne diseases increases in allergic diseases like allergies, asthma, eczema.

[00:53:35] We know it affects food and water, quality food and water availability. It increases risk of diarrheal diseases. We know that there are a number of mental health impacts from climate change. And then we also know that there is displacement as a result of climate change, and that displacement can also have a number of health impacts.

[00:53:52] And when you think about those health impacts altogether, there are, you know, direct impacts. So for example, if I'm thinking of extreme weather, there are direct impacts from an extreme weather event in that, you know, somebody in 2018 unfortunately died during a flood on the west side of Madison. So that's a direct impact to like trauma or drowning.

[00:54:10] But then there are indirect impacts as well. So on that same side of town, there was a healthcare clinic, a group health cooperative, where the entire clinic had to be shut down due to flooding. And so that's displaced healthcare



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for hundreds of patients who would have gone to that clinic. When we have extreme weather events, take out something like a water or sanitation facility, or if it takes out our local grocery store or, you know, other facilities that we rely on in order to meet our own personal needs as humans.

[00:54:37] That's, that's an issue and those are just direct and indirect to health effects of only one out of nine different areas that climate change is causing issues. And so as healthcare providers, that's, that's something for us to, to let people know that, even though we don't typically counsel about climate change in our clinics or in our hospital settings, with the frequency that we talked about smoking or healthy food choices, that unfortunately, because climate change is here and we know that it's going to get worse, that it's a topic that we need to start, just to start speaking about and spreading that people understand, all of this.

[00:55:13] **Nick Hylla:** Well, we appreciate you spending your time with us, June 24th to the 26th and Custer, Wisconsin. And we look forward to seeing you there, Andrew. Thanks so much,

[00:55:21]

[00:55:24] **Don Wichert:** I'm Don Wichert. I'm currently the owner of a consulting and investment company called Eudai, Eudai Energy. Eudai is short for eudaimonia, which is a Greek word for happiness. I'm sure your viewers might know that. And so it's happy energy.

[00:55:40] I've been involved in renewable energy in Wisconsin for over 30 years. I was involved with the State Energy Project, ran projects there for 24 years. I worked with a Focus on Energy and for a very short time, I was interim director of RENEW Wisconsin. So we've been involved in the technical aspects and also the policy aspects of renewables in Wisconsin.

[00:56:03] **Nick Hylla:** Great, we are excited to have you at the Fair. Would you please just talk a little bit about the presentation you're giving, this year?

[00:56:09] **Don Wichert:** Myself and Kurt Reinhold, who is the president of Legacy Solar Co-op, we'll be talking about a six year project or a case study that we did in Madison, Wisconsin.

[00:56:21] So it's basically a third-party ownership system using a Solar Legacy's Co-op tax financing model. Yeah, we, what we did is we put a 26



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kilowatt system on the roof of the Willy Street grocery co-op in Madison, Wisconsin, and we also installed 114 LED lights there.

[00:56:44] So, it's both a megawatt project and also...we sold solar recs to Willy Street over a five and a half year period, so that I could-- I was a equity sponsor of the project-- and I could use all the tax credits then that were available. So Kurt's going to be talking about how this whole process fits together and how it's, it's legal to do what he's doing.

[00:57:11] Now, I was one of the first projects that Legacy Solar did, and now they've got over 40 projects. But, but this is the first project that actually looked at all the different steps that you have to go through and the return. So this is both a, an economic and environmental assessment over the five and a half years that the project was going.

[00:57:33] I sold the project to Willy Street in March of this year. So we have a complete history. There's a couple of tax questions that still are up in the air. But, but we'll talk about

[00:57:44] **Nick Hylla:** those.

[00:57:44] But that sounds very interesting. For anyone interested in kind of that, third-party financing, you have a very, very solid case study here in Wisconsin.

[00:57:55] Don, would you talk about the Energy Fair? What do you like about the Fair? What are you looking forward to.

[00:58:00] **Don Wichert:** You know, I I've gone to all the Fairs since it's first started.

[00:58:05] Except for one that I don't remember if that was COVID or what it was. So I mean the Fair has just has so much things, all the workshops, all the great music, the, the keynote speakers and it's been fabulous. And I mean, I was, I was one of the first funders of the Fair, the first year, you know, when I was in charge of some programs at the energy office, you know, three people showed up and said, we're going to do a Fair by Amherst.

[00:58:33] And I thought, what really? But we were able to give them a little bit of seed money and it's really taken off. It's been fantastic.



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[00:58:40] **Nick Hylla:** Well, we thank you for that. And I think we have thank you cause I do believe we planted an avenue of advocates tree in your honor.

[00:58:47] **Don Wichert:** That's true and I feel very honored for that.

[00:58:51] Yeah, especially looking at all the other wonderful people. Who've contributed so much to a Wisconsin sustainability efforts over the years.

[00:59:00] **Nick Hylla:** Well, good. Well, we look forward to seeing you, June 24th to the 26th. Don, do you have any parting words for us?

[00:59:06] **Don Wichert:** Well, our, our segment is Friday at four o'clock in the red tent. And you know, I think, I think this is a very applicable, subject at the moment. I just saw where MREA has filed a petition with the public service commission today, I think, talking about third-party ownership.

[00:59:26] And the great thing about the Legacy Solar project, it's sort of a democratization of solar where so many different people can get involved, whether you own a own, a property. You can have good solar access or not. So we'll be going through all of that and I hope, people show up and we can describe what

[00:59:45] **Nick Hylla:** we did.

[00:59:47] All right, that's perfect. Awesome, thanks so much. And I look forward to seeing you in a few weeks, we'll see you then.

[00:59:54]

[00:59:57] **Todd Strother:** So my name is Todd Strother. I work for the Center for Technology Commercialization.

[01:00:02] This is an organization that assist small businesses, generally technology businesses in Wisconsin, primarily to, to help develop new technical products. And I've been with the organization for about eight years. Prior to that, I worked at a large scientific instruments company. And then prior to that, I was at a small

[01:00:19] **Brian Walsh:** biotech company.



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[01:00:21] And I'm Brian Walsh. I am a commercialization consultant with the Center for Technology Commercialization. I have been with an organization for a couple of years now. I also help in, advising on accessing federal funds from SBIR which we're going to get to talk about a little bit today. I think, my background before that was as a, as a small business owner in Wisconsin with a manufacturing businesses, business targeting, scientific equipment.

[01:00:47] So our workshop is called the Federal Grants to Drive Energy Innovation.

[01:00:52] And what we will be covering is a federal grant program called the SBIR. And we're going to be focusing on specifically on what the department of energy offers in terms of this federal grant program. So, we'll, we'll cover things that, money that's available for small businesses to do energy innovations with funding from the US, the Department of Energy.

[01:01:18] Coming to the workshop we are going to give them an overview of the amount of funding that's available, the kinds of companies that are eligible to participate. We'll talk about the timelines. So these are, these are grant and contract solicitations, so we'll talk about timelines.

[01:01:36] We'll talk about services that are available from the state of Wisconsin to help companies navigate this system and get applications in. Todd anything to add?

[01:01:47] **Todd Strother:** Yeah, so even before or afterwards, after the, the presentation that we have, we'll be happy to meet with individuals about their particular ideas.

[01:01:57] And if the SBIR program sounds or programs sound, reasonable for them to pursue, we can help describe the things that we can do to, to assist these people and these companies obtain those

[01:02:10] **Nick Hylla:** funds.

[01:02:11] Great, that's perfect. Have either of you been to the Energy Fair before?

[01:02:14] **Brian Walsh:** Yes, I've been to the Energy Fair before.



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[01:02:16] It's been a few years, but I've been a few times before in a different capacity.

[01:02:23] **Todd Strother:** I have not been to the Energy Fair. I am looking forward to it though.

[01:02:26] **Nick Hylla:** Good, well, we look forward to seeing you both and, I think I will be in your workshop. That sounds very interesting. And there's a lot of companies out there that could truly benefit from it.

[01:02:35] Anything else you'd like to add?

[01:02:37] **Brian Walsh:** Maybe I'll, I'll throw some numbers out, if I could. So last year in the Midwest, from the money that came from the Department of Energy from this program in the past three years, and amounted to over \$80 million. So generally a project from the department of energy as a phase one project, which we'll talk about, is up to \$250,000 in funds to help, to help do some R&D.

[01:03:06] **Nick Hylla:** Well, that sounds like a significant amount of support. And I know that, the Department of Energy at this point is very interested in supporting new business innovation. So this seems like a very, very timely workshop, and we appreciate you spending your time at the Energy Fair and, and helping prospective companies access the SBIR funds.

[01:03:25] And we will see you June 24th to the 26th at the Energy Fair. Thanks gentlemen. Thank you.

[01:03:31]

[01:03:34] **Jessica Miller:** My name is Jessica Miller and I am a naturalist environmental educator at Mosquito Hill Nature Center in New London, Wisconsin.

[01:03:43] And I have a 24 year career at the Center. 20 years of that being as a naturalist. The nature center is 471 acres. I think we're, you know, and I'm biased, but I think we are probably one of the most diverse nature centers in that we have a 200 foot hill on our property, as well as 12 and a half acre prairie and an extensive wetland system border by the Wolf River.



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[01:04:08] So because of that, we have a diversity of birds and wildlife and plants and wheaties. So the title of the, of the presentation is Eat Your Wheaties, and it's not, it's not a throwback to the breakfast of champions in the orange box.

[01:04:22] It's actually going out and finding quote/ unquote, weeds in your yard or around, in a natural area that are edible that can be used for medicinal purposes. So the, the basis of the program is to just familiarize the public with some basic weed species that they can eat. Dandelions, stinging nettle, chickweed. How to use those say in a salad or soup, or how to use them in maybe a tincture or a tea or a sav.

[01:04:52] **Nick Hylla:** Yeah, so you'll probably discuss some of the nutritional and medicinal benefits of the kind of common plants that we find around.

[01:05:01] **Jessica Miller:** Definitely! Yeah, exactly.

[01:05:03] **Nick Hylla:** And what are your favorite weeds to eat?

[01:05:07] **Jessica Miller:** Oh, that's like trying to, to get somebody to say, who's your favorite, your favorite child? You know, I think it really depends on the time of the year, really.

[01:05:16] So what I, what I drink or eat every day is I will always have dandelion root coffee. I'm weaning myself off of some caffeine. So I do dandelion and chicory root coffee. I also do, an infusion of stinging nettles, especially in the spring cause it's great for, adding nutrients into my diet. Uh chickweed when it's available, I'll make a little salad.

[01:05:38] So it really just depends on the time of the year. The nice thing about weeds is they're always there. And so it doesn't matter if it's in the spring, mid-summer late summer, early fall. You're going to be able to find something to utilize for medicinal or culinary purposes.

[01:05:54] **Nick Hylla:** And have you been to the Energy Fair

[01:05:56] **Jessica Miller:** I have! Yeah, both as a participant and, just coming out and oohing and aahing at all of the other presenters and all the things that are available for people.



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[01:06:05] **Nick Hylla:** And what's some of your favorite things to do at the Fair? Why do you come?

[01:06:09] **Jessica Miller:** Well, I really, I I've gained so much knowledge from just the variety of presenters. I mean, when you, when you hear the title Energy Fair, you think, oh, okay, well, this is just going to be for people who maybe want solar on their homes or who, who drive an electric car, but no, programs even like mine on, learning how to forage or, you know, learning all sorts of things. Things to eat, people to meet.

[01:06:35] The keynote speakers are amazing. The music, oh my gosh. The music every year is great. Getting to go and buy my annual, uh t-shirt or my MREA hat. It's just a really well run event every year that I look forward to.

[01:06:52] **Nick Hylla:** Alright, thanks Jessica. Is there anything else you'd like to share with us before we break?

[01:06:57] **Jessica Miller:** No, other than please come to my program at noon on Saturday of the MREA event!

[01:07:03] **Nick Hylla:** All right, great. Well, we will see you there. Thanks so much, Jessica. Thanks, Nick. Good to see ya

[01:07:08]

[01:07:11] **Francisco Sayu:** My name is Francisco Sayu

[01:07:13] I'm the director of emergent technology, RENEW Wisconsin. RENEW Wisconsin is a nonprofit that support the advancement of renewable energy since 1991, or has been working, policies and programs to support a healthier, stronger and more vibrant state. I grew up in Colombia moved to Wisconsin, to attend the University of Wisconsin, Madison actually, and, fell in love with the state.

[01:07:42] So this is home now. In my current role for RENEW, I support, electric vehicles and building electrification and other emergent technologies like battery storage and things like that. And I'm super excited about the opportunity to work on the integration of our buildings and our transportation infrastructure, which is related to the topic of the presentation that we'll be doing at the Fair.



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[01:08:06] So the title of the presentation is Vehicle-to-Grid: Opportunities and Challenges. I think it, I should make a disclaimer.

[01:08:17] It should be more like, you know, Vehicle-to-Grid: Unencumbered by Regulatory Restrictions, because it's a technology that is very exciting. But the energy market energy markets are heavily regulated. So there will be some challenges that we need to address in order to take advantage or full advantage of the technology.

[01:08:37] But the idea basically is that, with electric vehicles coming to market, we have a great opportunity to leverage those batteries, to support our grid. There's a lot of conversation around how the impact or the impact that electric vehicles are going to have on the grid. And a lot of the conversation is framing this kind of catastrophic scenario where all the grid, it's not going to be able to handle it.

[01:09:00] But then the truth is that we, we will have batteries that can serve as backup that can supplement the grid in moments of need. And this technology enables that. The presentation will be, we'll focus on the technical aspects of vehicle to grid technology. So you have a vehicle that has a battery. You have a building that requires energy to run.

[01:09:23] You can leverage your battery in your vehicle to do the things that you need to do in your building. So, and that technology is available today. Recently Ford launched their pickup truck the 450 Lightning. And with that, you can buy a home integration system, which allows you to, use your truck as a backup for your home.

[01:09:41] And you can run your home for up to three days. We're using the energy, the electricity that's in the battery. There are many applications of that for backup, for, resiliency for grid optimization. Energy prices change it dynamically constantly throughout the day. My dream is that one day we will have the technology and the policies that allow people in utilities to optimize the grid.

[01:10:06] So we're getting energy from the places that is most convenient for and cheaper for that specific time of the day. So, that's kind of the big picture is how do we integrate all these batteries that we have this amazing resource to serve the buildings that need electricity and how to do it the best possible way?



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[01:10:27] **Nick Hylla:** Yeah, that's great. That's an excellent description, really exciting. I'm going to be at your workshop for sure. And as someone that comes to your workshop, you know, what kind of information do you think that they'll encounter? Will it be conversational, will it be a presentation?

[01:10:45] **Francisco Sayu:** The workshop will be a presentation. Probably half of them will be just kind of, doing an overview of the technology. This is what it is. This is how it works. Here are the opportunities we have. Here are the challenges that we'll have to overcome. And then the other half will be a conversation. Q&A of, you know, things, you know, questions that people might have about, okay, how is this technology going to apply to, to me and my particular case?

[01:11:11] So it will be half and half a presentation and the other half a Q&A.

[01:11:16] **Nick Hylla:** Well, good. You should know, maybe you do, that we'll have an electric vehicle car show here, and we'll be charging. We'll probably charge 300-400 cars over the weekend. We have a fast charger on site and we'll have probably a dozen level two chargers.

[01:11:30] And we also have an energy storage tech center that we've developed here, with six different energy storage technologies and a tour. So I hope that you'll take that tour and we'll have a good conversation about it. Definitely.

[01:11:42] **Francisco Sayu:** I'm bringing the whole family, so we're going to spend an awesome weekend up there.

[01:11:46] And it's funny because when I was, making the plan with my, my wife, I told her about the Fair. And she's like, oh, we went there like years and years ago. And it's like, yeah, it's the same place. So, yeah.

[01:11:57] **Nick Hylla:** Well, great. We are a very family friendly event. I'm looking forward to meeting you in person and all of your family.

[01:12:02] And so I'll see you in a few weeks, June 24th to the 26th. Thanks for joining us

[01:12:06] **Francisco Sayu:** today. Likewise, thank you, Nick.

[01:12:09]



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[01:12:12] **Cory Neeley:** My name's Corey Neeley and I'm a director of SolarShare Wisconsin Cooperative. I've been working for the cooperative since January of this year.

[01:12:20] And prior to that, I was an entrepreneur and a utility rep for municipal utilities.

[01:12:26] **Nick Hylla:** Corey, tell us about SolarShare Wisconsin.

[01:12:29] **Cory Neeley:** Solarshare Wisconsin Cooperative is a, it's cooperative that was created by RENEW Wisconsin and board members of that organization. They had the idea they, they, met with folks in the solar industry to do their due diligence to decide if, if this was something that could be done.

[01:12:42] And, they built it out, last year, incorporating in November of last year. The idea behind it is to, you know, work cooperatively to build solar farms in the state of Wisconsin. We're looking at do one to five megawatt, solar farms and, fund those cooperatively, you know, so anyone can, invest in those.

[01:13:02] Any person from any background can invest in those. So as long as they're from the state of Wisconsin, or they have a business located in the state of Wisconsin. So, I'll be giving a presentation at the Midwest Renewable Energy Fair, Friday at 2:00 PM in the green tent.

[01:13:15] So I'm really hope that, you know, folks will come out and, attend that to see, you know, what the cooperatives all about and you know, how they can, be a part of the cooperative. You know, I think we're going to have a lot of, a lot of interest at the Fair and, there's some other presentations about small scale solar farms that I think, you know, folks can kind of, you know, get to before they come into my presentation.

[01:13:39] I know Michael, is going to be doing a presentation at noon of that day, as well. So I hope that folks will kind of, head over from his, his presentation in the yellow tent to mine and the green. And learn more

[01:13:51] **Nick Hylla:** about what we're doing.

[01:13:52] Yeah, can you describe the difference between how an investor would engage in a typical, large scale solar project and like what the cooperative it's offering to, kind of like the average consumer



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[01:14:06] **Cory Neeley:** in a traditional, you know, solar investment?

[01:14:09] You've got a few investors, you know, one would be the tax equity investor, and we're still gonna employ that, that model, but what's different about what we're doing is, you know, we're kind of pooling our resources to fill a different niche, which is the traditional equity investor. Now I am really excited about how this, this fits into, you know, the investment opportunities for, for traditional, for regular folks.

[01:14:34] Because right now you've got, essentially two different options. You can invest in the stock market, which is increasingly volatile and, maybe a little scary for the average investor or you have really safe investments that don't offer really great returns such as CDs or bonds. And so, you know, I feel like we, we fill this niche for folks that have a little bit of money sitting around their checking and savings accounts and allows them to kind of put that money to good use, and earn a little bit of return on that.

[01:15:03] Our goal is to seek out 5% return and, hopefully that's enough for folks to be enticed to do it. If it's not enough to entice them, hopefully the idea of, transitioning, Wisconsin's energy supply to solar is, is enough of an investment incentive as well.

[01:15:15] **Nick Hylla:** Great. And have you been to Energy Fair before?

[01:15:19] **Cory Neeley:** I've been to the Energy Fair, six or seven times. It's, it's been since my kids, been around, it's been my father's day weekend kind of excursion. And working at WPI we always got free tickets. So I always enjoyed going up there. You know, and we, we sometimes we'll stop by, MREA on our way up north and charge our vehicle or, you know, just pop by and take a little walk around.

[01:15:42] So I really enjoy the property and Custer and enjoy, visiting the folks up there every year or so.

[01:15:48] **Nick Hylla:** Well, Corey, that was great. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

[01:15:51] **Cory Neeley:** Oh, we're really excited to be presenting. I hope to, you know, present next year about the projects we've completed or, you know, projects we are working to complete.



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[01:16:00] And then really talk about how we're going to expand and, kind of really grow what we're doing here to, to help, you know, grow solar in the state of Wisconsin.

[01:16:09]

[01:16:12] **Heather Talbot:** So my name is Heather Talbot and I am a volunteer slash founder with Solar on La Crosse Schools.

[01:16:21] We are a volunteer group, here in the city of La Crosse. We are a hundred percent volunteer powered. So we are made up of a group of parents of La Crosse school district students, former, you know, students, so alumni of the district teachers, even students, we have some high school students that are involved with our work and we are simply working to make the transition to more renewable energy, specifically solar energy happen sooner in our community, within our school districts. So our local public schools, we're helping them transition to solar energy.

[01:16:53] So at the Energy Fair, we will be holding a workshop on Sunday. We're going to be presenting on community solar energy initiatives. So how can regular folks, friends, neighbors, you know, parents of young children like myself, advocate in an effective way to make change at a local level.

[01:17:15] For more solar energy, a transition to cleaner power, for our kids, for our families, for our neighbors. So we're going to be presenting about our story of how, even in the midst of the pandemic, right at the beginning of the pandemic, in fact, we founded a small volunteer group and have been able to make progress, even using virtual tools and, you know, for a year we met without even seeing one another face to face.

[01:17:40] And so, just committed to helping share what's possible. And what resources are out there specifically for helping schools transition to more solar energy. For, how community members can assist their municipal leaders or their school leaders, business leaders in town to help them see the different options that exist for supporting solar transition.

[01:18:03] So we will just be helping to inspire folks and equip them. And then we'll, you will definitely be open to connecting with folks, for followup too. So we're happy to, help folks, do what they can in their own communities using the model that we put together.



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[01:18:16] **Nick Hylla:** Great, and have you been to the Fair Energy

[01:18:18] **Heather Talbot:** Fair before?

[01:18:18] I have not been to the Energy Fair and I am so excited to go. My spouse actually did his undergraduate at Stevens Point. And so we did go to Stevens Point once just cause he wanted to show me around his old stomping grounds. So I understand that the Fair and, Custer, Wisconsin are nearby to Stevens Point.

[01:18:35] And so we are loading up our, we have a plug-in hybrid electric minivan, and we are putting a bunch of folks in it. Cause we've been spreading the word and wanting to bring, some folks along with us and we are shoving our bikes on there. So we can, bike to the Fair from where we're saying with some folks.

[01:18:52] And, yeah, I'm pretty stoked about it. I was super interested in sustainability. I got interested in sustainability in college. I studied sustainable community development and, we, we had some opportunities to connect, you know, regionally with folks, but it was, it was very much at that time, like, this kind of coastal enterprise, right?

[01:19:13] Like it felt like people on the coasts were like with it and they were, they were leading some of these transitions and these initiatives. And so I was really excited to hear about the Fair, this kind of Midwest, you know, connectional hub of folks that can come together and, really, inspire one another and just see what's happening.

[01:19:29] Cause I've learned, that we are doing a lot here in the Midwest, so it's, it's good.

[01:19:34]

[01:19:38] **Nick Hylla:** Thanks again for joining us today. Make sure you subscribe. Leave us to review and for more info on the Energy Fair go to theenergyfair.org. That's the [energyfair.org](https://theenergyfair.org).

[01:19:50] And we will see you there.