

## Are you interested in switching to renewable energy?

The Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission (GRPUC) is exploring whether to develop a Community Solar Garden (CSG) in order to provide a renewable energy option for its customers. GRPUC and the Itasca Clean Energy Team will be sponsoring a community forum at the Blandin Foundation on December 4<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 4:00. At the meeting we will offer an overview of solar garden efforts underway in Minnesota as well as introduce a range of possible models or approaches that we are considering for a CSG program here in Grand Rapids. You will have a chance to share your perspectives on these approaches and the criteria we are proposing be used in evaluating them. More details about the agenda will be available closer to the event. In the meantime, I hope you will mark your calendar and Save-the-Date for this Grand Rapids Solar Garden Community Forum.

**CSG Basics:** A community solar garden is an installation of solar panels whose power is shared by people, businesses and institutions in the community. A CSG gives everyone access to solar power, without having to set up their own individual system, and regardless of whether they are renters or property owners.

**Here is how it works:** An array of solar panels is installed in one or more locations with a good sunny exposure. The power is distributed through the local utility. People can purchase a subscription for solar power from the array, to provide all or part of the electricity they use each month. They are credited on their utility bill for the power created by their subscribed share of the CSG.

When you participate in community solar, you're choosing an alternative to fossil-fuel consumption. Solar energy is clean, helps to fight climate change, and can be produced locally. Additionally, those monthly credits that you receive will be calculated based on the current electric rate. That means if rates for conventional power go up, the value you receive from your panels' production will go up too.

For more information on CSG subscriptions, payment plans, and subscription costs, go to the Itasca Clean Energy Team's website, [energyteam.wabana.org](http://energyteam.wabana.org), and click on the Frequently Asked Questions document. If you are interested in helping to make the Grand Rapids CSG a reality, or if you are not a GRPUC customer but would like to learn more about potential CSG options from your utility provider, please contact the Itasca Clean Energy Team at [CommunitySolarGarden@wabana.org](mailto:CommunitySolarGarden@wabana.org)