



**GREAT PLAINS
INSTITUTE**

A Better, Cleaner, More Secure & Reliable Energy Future.

2016 IMPACT REPORT







The Secret Ingredient to Our Success

After two decades working on complex, transformational energy issues, we at the Great Plains Institute know what it takes to make real, positive change that advances a clean, efficient, and secure energy future.

What truly makes a difference? It's the ability to identify and bring together the people, institutions, and organizations who have both the power to shape our energy future and a genuine openness to working together for the sake of progress, even with those who may otherwise be adversaries. GPI's consensus-based approach, crafted and honed over the years, creates a safe space to bring people together to make meaningful connections, build a shared understanding of issues, and find and foster common ground. This is not the only way GPI creates the conditions for change, but it *is* a secret to our success.

As we look ahead to celebrating GPI's 20th anniversary in 2018, I have a growing appreciation for what GPI has accomplished. At the same time, **I see an increasing need for our bridge-building approach and leadership, especially as the world seems more fractured.**

The Great Plains Institute has built relationships over our 20-year history based on trust, professionalism, and commitment. We have worked with partners across sectors and party lines to move toward a better energy future. We're one of the first and only among a handful of nonprofits globally who work on the full suite of strategies fundamental to achieving long-term emission reduction targets.

The demand for our approach in today's rapidly changing landscape is only increasing. In the last three years alone, our total support and revenue has more than tripled, and we've grown from a staff of 15 to 31. These numbers are noteworthy in that they indicate the growing recognition of and need for GPI's approach. And that need is even greater as we look ahead to the future.

I invite you to learn more in the following pages about how GPI's experts and partners are bringing people together – from engaging local communities and businesses to building national coalitions – to work toward a cleaner, more efficient, and secure energy future.

While using the word “secret” in the title above is tongue-in-cheek, it's a fitting descriptor for the less-visible, gradual process that goes into our relationship building, which is the foundation for all of our work. Bringing together a group of interests who have a shared commitment to one another is a powerful way to enact change that endures. We look forward to discovering new partnerships and deepening existing ones to take on today's most pressing challenges while pursuing the opportunities of the future.

Whether we've just met or you've been a long-time supporter, thank you for your role in GPI's two decades of success in advancing better energy.

Warm regards,

Rolf Nordstrom
President & CEO



2016 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Great Plains Institute (GPI) staff work across a broad portfolio of focus areas to transform the way we produce, distribute, and consume energy to be both environmentally and economically sustainable. We are pleased to share specific program accomplishments in the areas of energy efficiency, energy infrastructure, fossil energy, transportation, sustainable communities, renewable energy and fuels, and international collaboration.

More Efficiency and More Savings

- We published an extensive case study of the Small Business Energy Coaching pilot project, an effort to increase the energy efficiency of small businesses along one of Minneapolis' most diverse commercial corridors.

RESULTS

83

BUSINESSES
RECEIVED
ENERGY
ASSESSMENTS

19

COMPLETED
ENERGY
EFFICIENCY
PROJECTS

- We worked with two community partners, Hutchinson and Woodbury, to support local efforts to increase energy efficiency through the ENERGY STAR Challenge and lessen the environmental impact from excessive energy use in buildings. The ENERGY STAR Challenge is a statewide project organized by GPI, the U.S. Green Building Council – Minnesota, and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Energy Smart program.

RESULTS

80
24

ENERGY STAR
BUILDINGS SIGNED UP
FOR THE CHALLENGE

RECEIVED QUALIFYING
SCORES



- We collaborated with partners to conduct education and outreach efforts in Michigan to key policy and decision makers on the benefits of cogeneration projects. We sought out regulatory and policy opportunities for utilities and industrial customers to consider cogeneration projects as a valuable resource and an opportunity to reduce energy waste.
- Together with our partners and technical experts, we conducted analysis on the potential impact to Minnesota cogeneration projects from utility proposals on the package of charges applied to distributed energy projects, known as standby rates. **These rates can be the largest barrier in preventing economical and efficient cogeneration projects from being built.**







Increasing Renewables on the Electricity Grid

- We developed an online mapping tool to demonstrate the importance of transmission infrastructure to support renewable energy build-out and to help users understand and visualize the Multi-Value Project transmission portfolio, a **\$6 billion investment that supports 25,000 MWs of wind energy resources.**
- We worked with Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO, the regional grid operator) to increase deployment of renewable electricity, including transmission infrastructure, energy storage, and demand response technologies. **GPI developed a broad stakeholder coalition to voice support for demand response and energy storage market reforms.**

RESULTS

MISO'S PLANNING PROCESS ADOPTED ITS MOST AGGRESSIVE RENEWABLE ENERGY AND DISTRIBUTED ENERGY RESOURCE BUILD-OUT ASSUMPTIONS TO DATE.



Conducting Analysis to Support Decision-Making

- As the cost of storage technologies decline and access to the market improves, we published the report ***Evaluating the Economics for Energy Storage in the Midcontinent***, which evaluates the revenue opportunity for battery technology in three market areas.
- We contributed new features, user interfaces, and programming to the GREET life cycle GHG model, the world's premier tool for calculating lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions for transportation fuels. While helping the Argonne team improve the model, GPI also produced a series of tutorial videos to introduce the public to GREET and the practice of lifecycle GHG assessment. GPI has an ongoing partnership with Argonne National Lab.
- We analyzed the sources of grid power and determined the lifecycle GHG impact of electric vehicles (EVs) in Minnesota and also conducted an analysis of EV carbon impact. **The most important factor in determining EV carbon impact is grid power used to charge electric vehicles.**

RESULTS

AN EV DRIVEN IN MN USING POWER FROM THE LARGEST UTILITY IN THE STATE HAS 60% LOWER GHG EMISSIONS THAN A COMPARABLE GASOLINE CAR.



SINCE MOST EV DRIVERS SUBSCRIBE TO 100% RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY PURCHASE PROGRAMS, SUCH AS XCEL ENERGY'S WINDSOURCE OR GREAT RIVER ENERGY'S WELLSPRING, THEIR CAR ACTUALLY REDUCES GHG EMISSIONS BY ABOUT 95%.





Working with States on Cost-Effective Ways to Reduce Emissions

► We convened the **Midcontinent Power Sector Collaborative**, which brings together power companies—investor-owned utilities, generation and transmission cooperatives, merchant generators, and a municipal joint action agency—together with environmental organizations and state environmental and utility regulators to consider an optimal approach to reduce carbon emissions from existing power plants and meet Clean Power Plan requirements, should the requirements survive legal challenges.

RESULTS

THE COLLABORATIVE LAUNCHED A NEW WHITE PAPER SERIES AND HAS PUBLISHED TWO WHITE PAPERS TO INFORM THE DISCUSSION AROUND ALLOWANCE ALLOCATIONS AND WHETHER TO COVER NEW SOURCES.



► Together with the **Bipartisan Policy Center** and **Duke University's Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions**, we hosted a workshop, **Power Sector Trends in the Eastern Interconnect: Implications for Environmental Policies & Investments**. Hundreds of people across the U.S. watched live as the workshop brought together more than 150 experts, state officials, and stakeholders from across the eastern interconnect to explore recent modeling analyses that provided new insights into trends in the electricity sector. The event explored what these trends mean for state energy and environmental policy choices.

► GPI co-facilitated the state-led **Midcontinent States Environmental and Energy Regulators** and **PJM States Energy & Environmental Regulators** groups, which include energy and environment state officials in both the MISO and PJM footprints. The groups continue to pursue a “no regrets” approach to unpack and analyze the implications of potential carbon rules on the power sector, should the rule survive legal challenges.

Supporting Deployment of Carbon Capture and Storage with Enhanced Oil Recovery

► Facilitated by GPI, Governors Matt Mead (R-WY) and Steve Bullock (D-MT) jointly convened the **State CO₂-EOR Deployment Work Group** to conduct analysis and policy identification and the development of recommendations for state and federal policy makers. The work group includes officials from 14 states.

► The work group released a new report - ***Putting the Puzzle Together: State & Federal Policy Drivers for Growing America's Carbon Capture & CO₂-EOR Industry*** – which outlines growing opportunities for capturing carbon dioxide for use in enhanced oil recovery (CO₂-EOR).





Improving Local Planning Practices to Support Clean Energy Deployment

- ▶ We expanded GPI's resiliency work, which provides tools, analysis, and technical assistance to local and regional governments to plan for and create more sustainable and resilient communities. Our sustainability and resiliency work turns policy into action at the local level.
- Worked with the Metropolitan Council to develop its resilience element for the Local Planning Handbook
- Supported the MN Pollution Control Agency in writing a new GreenStep Cities resilience best practice
- Completed a resilience assessment for the City of Falcon Heights
- Completed a Vulnerable Population Assessment for the City of Austin
- Completed an energy plan for the City of Shorewood
- Initiated work with the City of Golden Valley on a resilience plan and with St. Louis Park on creating a climate action plan that gets the city to be carbon neutral by 2040

Providing Leadership in Local and Regional Solar Market Transformation Initiatives

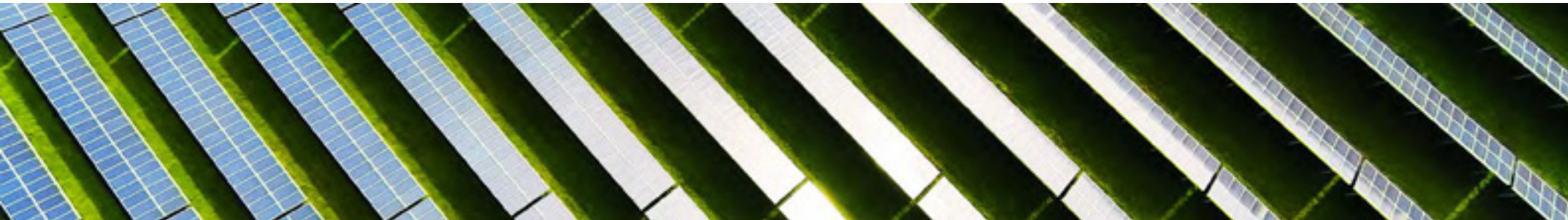
- ▶ Provided direct assistance, through **Grow Solar Partnership**, to dozens of local governments across Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin on becoming "shovel-ready" for solar investment and development
- ▶ We contributed to the launch of the National SolSmart local government "solar-ready" certification program, lead the nation in recruiting local governments to participate, and helped define the national best practices for certification.
- ▶ Worked with the Minnesota Metropolitan Council to ensure that metro-area communities address their local solar resources and solar development in all 188 comprehensive plans to be completed over the next two years.

Increasing Deployment of Solar Energy and Transforming Local Solar Energy Markets

- ▶ We convened the Solar Garden Subscriber Collaborative through Metro CERT, which **brought together 31 local governments in Minnesota** to jointly seek solar garden subscriptions for public buildings.

RESULTS

25 PARTICIPANTS SIGNED CONTRACTS
TOTALING 35 MW OF SOLAR POWER
TO OFFSET ELECTRICITY USAGE
IN CITY HALLS, POLICE AND FIRE
STATIONS, COMMUNITY CENTERS,
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS,
AND STREETLIGHTS.





Developing Resources for Energy System Planning

- ▶ We worked closely with our partners and a diverse group of stakeholders to produce the Minnesota 2025 Energy Action Plan. The Action Plan lays out a path for Minnesota to advance a clean, reliable, resilient, and affordable energy system. **Final Action Plan is available at www.mn.gov/commerce.**
- ▶ We published a set of white papers from the **e21 Initiative** (electric system for the 21st century) to inform policymakers, regulators, organizations representing ratepayers, and others as they consider implementation of e21's recommendations.

RESULTS

THE E21 PHASE II REPORT DETAILS ADDITIONAL STEPS FOR MINNESOTA TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC INTEREST BY TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF A CLEANER ELECTRIC SYSTEM AND A MORE CUSTOMER-CENTRIC UTILITY POLICY FRAMEWORK. FINAL REPORT AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE AT: WWW.BETTERENERGY.ORG/E21-PHASEII



Forming New Partnerships to Accelerate Progress

- ▶ We joined the **Minnesota Sustainable Growth Coalition**, a new effort which aims to harness the expertise of its members to advance the next frontier of corporate sustainability - **the circular economy**.
- ▶ GPI is one of 25 members of the Coalition, convened by Environmental Initiative, and among well-known global brands headquartered in Minnesota, including Target, Medtronic, Hormel Foods, General Mills, Ecolab, Cargill, and other members from utility, legal, engineering, health, and nonprofit sectors.

Building Relationships and Learning Best Practices from Around the World

- ▶ In our international efforts, we participated as a key project partner in the **Climate Smart Municipality Program**. This program pairs Minnesota cities with German cities to enhance collaboration and build relationships in an effort to accelerate local climate action. The Minnesota delegation traveled to Germany in July to tour partner cities in North Rhine-Westphalia, and our German counterparts came to Minnesota in October to visit with partner cities and learn about innovative projects in the Twin Cities.

- ▶ We participated in a one-week U.S. delegation to Sweden to meet with experts from Sweden's innovation sector to increase cross-nation dialogue and explore new and sustainable business opportunities between the U.S. and Sweden.
- ▶ GPI hosted a delegation of Swedish biogas companies and consultants in May and arranged a series of visits and site tours in Minnesota.

RESULTS

DUE TO OUR MATCHMAKING EFFORTS, A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN A MINNESOTA PROJECT DEVELOPER AND A SWEDISH TECHNOLOGY FIRM SUCCESSFULLY RESPONDED TO A GLOBAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FROM THE SWEDISH ENERGY AGENCY. THE PARTNERSHIP IS MOVING AHEAD WITH A DESIGN AND ENGINEERING STUDY FOR A BIOGAS PROJECT IN WESTERN WISCONSIN.





Thought Leadership and Industry Convening Accomplishments

- ▶ GPI hosted the 2nd Energy Innovation Celebration, bringing together nearly 300 energy thought leaders, entrepreneurs, businesses, nonprofits, and government professionals to celebrate a future powered by better energy.
- ▶ Charity Navigator, the leading charity evaluator in America, awarded GPI with its second consecutive 4-star rating demonstrating strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency. Only 23% of charities evaluated received at least two consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that GPI outperforms most other charities in America.

GROWING IMPACT - LEADING COLLABORATIONS

Convened by the Great Plains Institute, the **Bioeconomy Coalition of Minnesota** seeks to make Minnesota the best place in the world to grow an environmentally and economically sustainable bioeconomy through individual project support, education of stakeholders and policy leaders, research and analysis, communication, policy and regulatory advocacy, and strategic planning.

- ▶ We secured funding for a feasibility study and implementation plan at the Minnesota Legislature for a program to incent agricultural producers to establish and maintain perennial crops that can be harvested and used as a feedstock for bioenergy production. **This market-based approach has the potential to reduce**

emissions and create new economic opportunities for Minnesota communities, while also helping improve water quality in targeted watersheds. This work built on policy success during the 2015 legislative session by the Bioeconomy Coalition of Minnesota and our allies.

RESULTS

\$594,000 SECURED FOR THE MINNESOTA BOARD OF SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES AND THE POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY TO COMPLETE AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE WORKING LANDS WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT.





Charge Forward

DriveElectricMN.org

Zero Emission



GROWING IMPACT - LEADING COLLABORATIONS

Led by the Great Plains Institute, **Drive Electric Minnesota** is a partnership of Minnesota's electric vehicle (EV) champions dedicated to encouraging the deployment of EVs and the establishment of EV charging infrastructure through public-private partnerships, financial incentives, education, technical support, and public policy.

Drive Electric Minnesota charged forward in 2016 with several activities to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles in Minnesota:

- ▶ Partnered with Nissan North America to offer consumer incentives on the purchase of a new 100% electric-powered Nissan Leaf. Partnership promotion efforts resulted in a monthly sales increase of Nissan Leafs ten times over normal monthly sales.
- ▶ Secured sponsorship in the form of a fully branded Nissan Leaf with Drive Electric MN's colors and logo to be used as a direct street promotional tool.
- ▶ Launched a new brand and website, which received multiple awards for design.

▶ Hosted several ride and drive events, giving hundreds of people the opportunity to "kick the tires".

▶ The policy committee pushed for new legislation in Minnesota to enable regulated electric utilities to make investments in EV charging, education and outreach, and research into the use of EVs to help the electric grid operate more efficiently.

RESULTS

DRIVE ELECTRIC MN'S POLICY PRIORITIES PASSED THE MINNESOTA SENATE 41-19 WITH STRONG BIPARTISAN SUPPORT. ALTHOUGH THE POLICY DID NOT GET ACROSS THE FINISH LINE, STRONG SUPPORT FROM A WIDE RANGE OF STAKEHOLDERS AND LEGISLATORS CREATES A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR EFFORTS IN 2017 AND BEYOND.



Great Plains Institute is a partner in **Minnesota GreenStep Cities**, which encourages and supports cities' efforts for substantive action and achievement of their sustainability goals through the implementation of best practices.

▶ We engaged more than 40% of the state's population through the **Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program**. The program added a new resilience best practice and launched Step 4, which helps cities create and track sustainability metrics. **GreenStep Cities is one of 12 statewide programs participating in a new national network aimed at accelerating sustainability program success.**

RESULTS

ESTABLISHED SUSTAINABILITY AS THE NORM FOR THE 100+ CITIES PARTICIPATING IN THE MINNESOTA GREENSTEP CITIES PROGRAM.





Operated by the Great Plains Institute, **Metro CERT** is one of seven regions that comprise Minnesota's Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) — a partnership of four organizations working together to connect individuals and their communities to the resources they need to identify and implement community-based clean energy projects.

► We supported a community-wide effort in Chisago County through Metro CERT to engage residents, businesses, cities, and institutions to save energy dollars and create energy from renewable sources via the Chisago Clean Energy Hub.



Metro CERT selected six projects to receive financial assistance for community-based energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, including:

1

Metro Regional Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (MNIPL): Energy Efficiency Teams

2

Chisago Lakes Chamber of Commerce: Chisago Lakes Area Hub

3

Minnesota Community Action Partnership Association: Community Solar for Community Action

4

City of Elk River: Elk River Fuel Efficient Fleet

5

Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light: Chisago Lakes Area Congregation Outreach

6

Tangletown Neighborhood Association: Small Business Rooftop Solar Assessments





Co-convened by the Great Plains Institute and the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, the **National Enhanced Oil Recovery Initiative** is the leading national coalition of coal, electric power, chemical, ethanol, and energy technology companies; labor unions; environmental organizations; and state officials dedicated to supporting federal incentives for the capture and use of CO₂ from power plants and industrial facilities for use in enhanced oil recovery and permanent storage of the CO₂.

► We built bipartisan Congressional support to extend the current federal tax credit incentive for carbon capture and storage and increase its value for each ton of CO₂ that is captured from power plants and industrial facilities and stored through enhanced oil recovery or other geologic storage. The bill was supported by a diverse coalition of business interests, utilities, labor unions, and environmental organizations.

RESULTS

SENATE BILL 3179 SECURED 18 CO-SPONSORS – 10 DEMOCRATS AND 8 REPUBLICANS. HOUSE BILL 4622 SECURED 45 CO-SPONSORS – 30 REPUBLICANS AND 15 DEMOCRATS.





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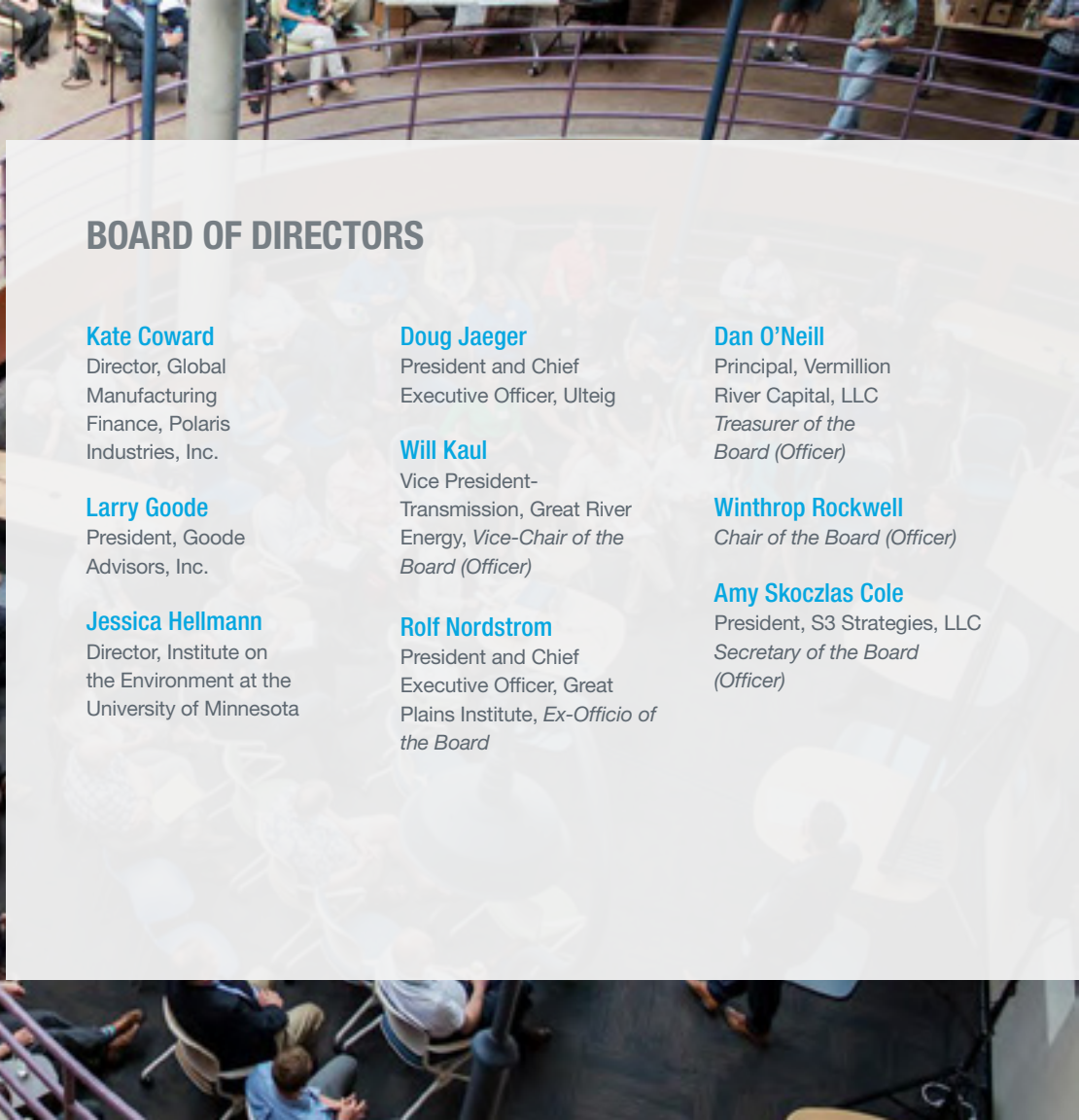
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2016

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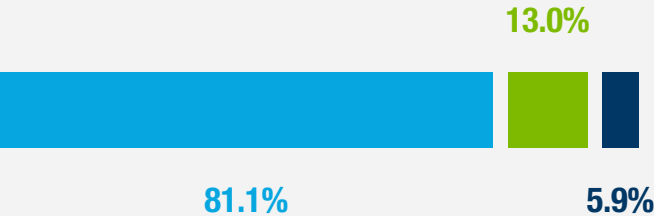
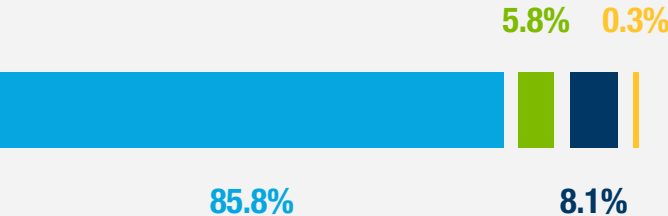
2016 STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Support & Revenue

Contributions	\$4,077,903	
Government Contracts	\$274,872	
Other Contracts	\$387,447	
Other Income	\$12,583	
Total	\$4,752,805	

Expenses

Program Services	\$3,940,045	
Management & General	\$632,844	
Fundraising	\$287,748	
Total Expenses	\$4,860,637	
Change in Net Assets	\$107,832	





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