



**NEWS RELEASE**

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Feb. 24, 2016

## **Xcel Energy announces plans for Wisconsin's largest community solar garden program**

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. – Solar energy is taking a significant step forward as Xcel Energy, the nation's leading utility provider of wind energy, today announced plans to create Wisconsin's largest community solar garden program.

As part of Solar\*Connect Community<sup>SM</sup>, Xcel Energy plans to purchase up to three megawatts of electricity from community solar arrays, the first two megawatts of which are planned for Eau Claire and La Crosse counties.

Once sufficient customer interest is demonstrated, the first two solar gardens will be built by San-Francisco-based [Pristine Sun](#), a leading developer of small utility-scale solar projects in the United States.

“Our customers have told us they want more options when it comes to their energy and Solar\*Connect Community allows them to support local solar energy,” said Mark Stoering, president, Northern States Power Company-Wisconsin, an Xcel Energy company. “The program is easy and flexible, and lets customers choose their own subscription level and receive a monthly credit based on the solar energy production. This is a great way for customers to support solar without having to install it on their property.”

### **Customers looking forward to community solar**

Xcel Energy customers are excited about having community solar gardens in their area. “We are enthusiastic that Xcel Energy is developing solar gardens in western and northern Wisconsin,” says Jeff Rich, executive director, GL Envision-Gundersen Health System. “The goal of providing clean, carbon-free electricity generating opportunities in local communities is commendable.”

Over the next few months, Xcel Energy will partner with the [Midwest Renewable Energy Association](#) to host up to 10 town hall style meetings throughout western and northern Wisconsin. At these “Solar Power Hours,” Xcel Energy electricity customers will learn more about the benefits of community solar and be able to sign up for subscriptions.

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“Since 1990, the Midwest Renewable Energy Association has worked to educate and demonstrate the benefits of solar power, and we are very excited to partner with Xcel Energy to promote their Solar\*Connect Community program,” said Doug Stingle, development director, MREA. “Solar\*Connect Community will offer affordable solar power options to all electricity customers in their service area, and we look forward to working with Xcel Energy to grow solar in Wisconsin.”

In October 2015, Xcel Energy proposed to further transform its energy system away from coal to even cleaner energy sources, investing in additional solar, wind and natural gas. The result will be a 60 percent reduction in carbon emissions and a 63 percent carbon-free energy mix by 2030.

### Sign-ups begin

Xcel Energy plans to offer subscriptions at a cost of \$1,780 per kilowatt. The minimum subscription size is 200 watts for an upfront cost of \$356, which would produce enough energy to offset about 3 percent of an average residential customer’s usage. Subscriptions can be sized up to 100 percent of a customer’s average annual usage, not to exceed 400 kilowatts.

Customers will pay a deposit of \$200 per kilowatt, with the remainder of the subscription fee due when the solar garden is operational in late 2016. In order for the solar gardens to be built by the end of the year, Xcel Energy will need to receive a strong showing of customer interest through subscriptions by mid-April. The size and number of solar gardens built will depend on customer subscriptions. In addition to these two solar gardens, Xcel Energy may opt to build up to one megawatt of additional community solar generation that could be operational in 2017. For more information, visit [www.xcelenergy.com/SolarConnectCommunity](http://www.xcelenergy.com/SolarConnectCommunity).

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### Xcel Energy’s Solar\*Connect Community Facts

	Xcel Energy Solar*Connect Community Garden I	Xcel Energy Solar*Connect Community Garden II
<b>Location</b>	Eau Claire County	La Crosse County
<b>System Size</b>	1 MW	1 MW
<b>Number of Panels</b>	3,225	3,225
<b>Capacity per Panel</b>	310 Watts	310 Watts
<b>Solar Bill Credit*</b>	Residential, Farm and Small Business: \$0.074/kWh Large Business: \$0.069/kWh	
<b>Max. Subscription</b>	100% of annual energy use up to 400 kW	
<b>Subscription Term</b>	25 years	
<b>Participation</b>	All Xcel Energy electricity customers in Wisconsin	

\*Credit based on rates in effect in 2016.

Xcel Energy (NYSE: XEL) is a major U.S. electricity and natural gas company with regulated operations in eight Western and Midwestern states. Xcel Energy provides a comprehensive portfolio of energy-related products and services to 3.4 million electricity customers and 1.9 million natural gas customers through its regulated operating companies. Holding company headquarters are located in Minneapolis. The company's Wisconsin and Michigan operating company headquarters are located in Eau Claire, Wis. More information is available at [xcelenergy.com](http://xcelenergy.com).

Pristine Sun is an independent power producer, a full service EPC, and a leading developer of small utility-scale solar PV power plants. In February 2015, the company signed an agreement to build the largest floating solar project in the United States. In March of 2015, the company signed an agreement to build Vermont's largest solar project on a landfill in Brattleboro, Vt.