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Ten years of advancing renewable energy in missouri and the midwest: Impacts and results

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For more than ten years, the issues surrounding renewable energy and how renewables can benefit the State of Missouri and greater Midwest have been discussed at a national meeting held annually in Columbia, MO. The conference began as a cooperative effort between Columbia Water and Light, the University of Missouri, the State of Missouri, and Renew Missouri. Today the conference is a two-day event that invites locally, nationally, and internationally known speakers to discuss cutting-edge issues in renewable and efficiency technologies, the economics of renewables, conservation, education, and the science of renewable energy and environment. Of late, more than two hundred people have attended the meeting from the public and private sectors, including utilities, energy providers, and vendors. The conference regularly provides continuing education for engineers. Since the first event in 2006 Missouri has made significant strides in adopting renewable energy as part of its energy mix. Solar interconnection laws, Renewable Portfolio Standards, Rate-based energy efficiency programs, and more, have resulted in over a hundred million megawatt-hours that are generated, or saved, annually through utility programs alone. Although the conference cannot directly claim credit for any specific accomplishments, it is more than coincidental that organizers of all the major renewable energy efforts in the state have been in attendance at the conference at one time or another. Rockport, Missouri, for instance, a small town close to the Iowa border, that in 2009 became the first city in the US to cover 100% of its energy use through wind power, was connected to the conference as the wind project developer that created that opportunity was a keynote speaker at the first event in 2006.

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