

RETAP Community Sustainability Assistance

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency offers the services, at no charge, of four retired environmental professionals from its **Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program** - RETAP. They can work up to approximately 40 hours per community, with a focus on GreenStep cities, Indian Nations, and cities in the process of submitting a GreenStep resolution to their city council.

If your community could use this assistance, please contact Philipp Muessig, GreenStep Cities Co-director, to discuss further: 651/757-2594 or philipp.muessig@state.mn.us

Assistance from two Twin Cities-based professionals and two Greater Minnesota-based (Bemidji and Winona) professionals focuses on one or more of the following tasks:

An inventory of past city accomplishments and planned actions

- Interviews with city staff and others
- Documentation of which GreenStep best practice actions have been completed and which are in the planning/implementation stage
- Either entry of this information onto the GreenStep web site or preparation for another person to do this

Recommendations for completing one or more high-impact best practice actions

- Either begin to help the city plan, and/or help the city bring in expert help, which might include other RETAP staff with energy, water and solid waste expertise – see <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/retap>

Recommendations on sustainability indicators

- Explore what metrics the city currently gathers and which suite of GreenStep Cities Step 4 performance indicators the city might want to track

Other city-defined tasks

- Contact Philipp to discuss a project you have in mind that you feel could be aided by one of the RETAP staff below

Diana Kuklinski – Registered Environmental Health Specialist and Permaculturist. Served as the director of a regional environmental health program for the Indian Health Service, where she developed a new program emphasis in sustainability. Completed a degree in Sustainable Environment Technology from Northwest Technical College. Coordinates and teaches Permaculture classes at the Rail River Folk School, participates on several Bemidji sustainability committees, conducts solar site assessments, and provides technical assistance in various areas. She led development of the first commercial photovoltaic project in Bemidji. Whether it's researching energy or efficiency options, funding, conducting solar site assessments, designing renewable energy systems, writing grant proposals and reports, or crunching data, Diana enjoys working with communities to discover ways to reduce energy and greenhouse gas footprints.

Chris Meyer – Currently the Southeast Clean Energy Resource Teams Coordinator for the University of Minnesota's Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships. In 2017 completed an MAS in Environmental Policy Management with an emphasis on Energy and Sustainability from Denver University. Chris also has a BFA in printmaking from the University of Minnesota and a BS in Economics from Drake University. A personal journey which started with a desire to install solar



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panels lead to a DIY project for a net-zero-energy home remodel, becoming a residential PV site assessor, community solar organizer, and coordinating the Minnesota Renewable Energy Society's statewide renewable energy tour. Chris is an Extension Master Gardener and helps organize and works in a community garden that donates produce to local food shelves, and is working with the City of Winona to implement a residential rain garden program.

Michael Orange – Served Minneapolis as a city planner and environmental manager (1976–2007) and wrote the first draft of the *Minneapolis Sustainability Plan*. Since leaving the city, he formed his private consulting business, ORANGE Environmental, LLC, and has prepared over twenty analyses primarily for city clients. Studies include a zoning analysis for the City of St. Paul, a recycling study for the City of Farmington, and citywide carbon baseline assessments for 21 cities and Washington County. The sustainability assessment he prepared for the City of West St. Paul formed the basis for his subsequent work to integrate sustainability into the City's zoning ordinance. He has assisted in the preparation of emerald ash borer management plans for the Twin Cities region and for three metro cities. He teaches a graduate-level course, *Sustainable City Planning*, at MSU-Mankato.

Barb Thoman – Twenty years of experience in transportation with a focus on bicycle and pedestrian access and safety, complete streets, public transit, parking policy, transportation finance, and policy and legislative change. Co-founder and Executive Director at Transit for Livable Communities (TLC) until 2015. In Barb's final years at TLC she administered a \$28 million federal program to increase safety and access for walking and bicycling in the Twin Cities metro area. Barb also served five years on the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Advisory Board. Previously, she worked ten years in solid waste management for state and county government. Barb has a BA in Financial Administration from Michigan State University.