



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mankato West, Minnesota New Country School, Springfield, and Westbrook-Walnut Grove YES! Teams  
Participate in Community Solar Winter Workshop in Mankato**

Mankato, MN, February 18, 2016—43 students and teachers from Youth Energy Summit (YES!) teams at Mankato West High School, Springfield High School, Minnesota New Country School, and Westbrook-Walnut Grove (WWG) Secondary School participated in the recent Community Solar Winter Workshop in Mankato on February 17, 2016. This workshop provided insights on community solar and ethanol, allowing students to connect with experts and gain information to position them for success as they excel in team-based projects this school year.

The day started at Mankato West High School where guest speakers Jim Haler, Member Services Manager of South Central Electric Association, and Tim Zinniel, Owner of Zinniel Electric, talked to the students about a recent solar photovoltaic (PV) community solar installation in Lake Crystal. Zinniel was impressed by the knowledge of the students and commented that “I don’t think a dictionary could have summarized it any better” upon hearing the definition a student gave of a watt hour.

After the guest speakers concluded their presentations, the students headed to the POET Biorefining-Lake Crystal ethanol plant to learn about the process behind ethanol production and tour the plant. Pat Merrick, coach of the WWG YES! Team, commented that “so many of these students come from corn producing farms; it’s interesting for them to see the other side of things.” While touring the plant, students saw several truckloads of corn being unloaded in a matter of minutes into the plant. POET is able to produce 56 million gallons of ethanol per year from its Lake Crystal plant.

**ABOUT YOUTH ENERGY SUMMIT**

YES! empowers youth to partner with their community to create economic and environmental vitality through hands-on learning and team-based projects related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste reduction, recycling, composting, local foods, and more. The YES! Program is a collaboration between Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, Laurentian Environmental Center, Saint John's Outdoor University, and Ney Nature Center. Major funding for the 2015-2016 season is provided by the McKnight Foundation and the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, a constitutionally-established permanent fund for protecting and enhancing Minnesota's environment and natural resources, as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). For more information, visit

[www.youthenergysummit.org](http://www.youthenergysummit.org)

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