

Advancing the Madelia Model

Prepared By Rural Advantage

Background:

In southern Minnesota, and throughout the United States, there is much a buzz about alternative energy- especially corn grain or stover to ethanol. Farmers, governments, business and industry are quick to jump on the ethanol ‘train’ and perceive it to be the answer to rising energy prices. But, corn requires excessive energy and water to grow and process. Rural Advantage and their partners have been developing a new paradigm, called “The Madelia Model”, to get people to think beyond ethanol and toward an alternative energy solution that can provide *multiple benefits* including a more sustainable solution for rural communities economically, environmentally and socially. Since 2003 we have been developing the Madelia Model concept and in February 2007 released the “Madelia Bio-Based Eco-Industrial Assessment” report which provides a framework we will be building from. This report is available online at <http://www.agobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid+97573>.

Premise:

The premise of the Madelia Model is that *from a 25 mile radius around your community you can grow, or collect from natural or industrial sources, enough biomass to fuel your community and provide feedstock for bio-based processing*. The model looks at being able to supply locally grown biomass which will provide a market for perennial crops [3rd crops] on the landscape resulting in improved water quality plus create jobs in rural areas. The energy crop we support is native grasses which would provide additional ecological benefits such as clean water, carbon sequestration and improved wildlife habitat and diversity. The Madelia Project is a model for how we can do renewable energy, water quality improvements and rural revitalization right.

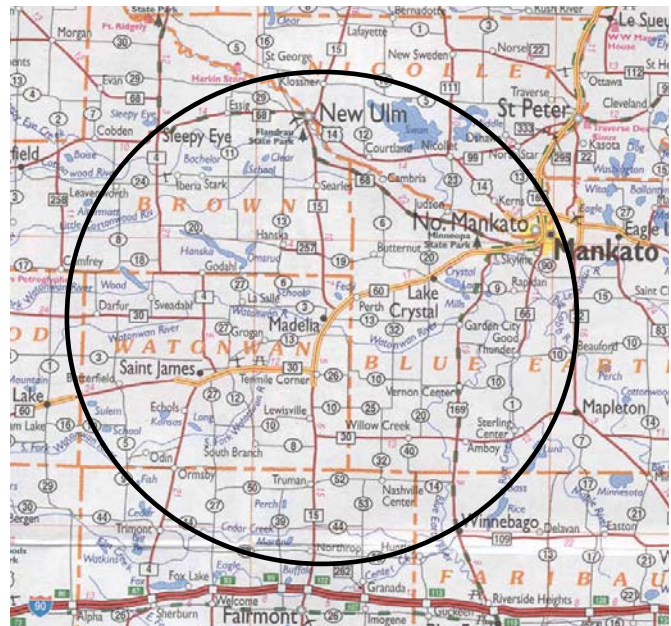
Partners:

Throughout this process we have been working with the following partners:

- Madelia Light and Power
- City of Madelia
- Madelia Chamber of Commerce
- University of Minnesota
- Sustainable Development Strategic Initiatives - MN PCA
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy [IATP].

Principles:

This past spring the Madelia community participated in a broader community meeting about the Madelia Model followed by five sector [farmers, business/ industry/ local government, citizens, Latino] meetings to identify a set of principles. These principles provide a platform for new growth in the Madelia area that will help



move the region to a more sustainable future – economically, environmentally and socially. The principles agreed to include the following:

- Economic –
 - Local ownership of renewable energy opportunities;
 - Nurture industries and businesses that provide living wage jobs;
 - Opportunity for all community members to benefit and profit from the Madelia Model; and
 - Incentives for employees of businesses and industries to live in the Madelia community.
- Environment-
 - Manage the landscape in a diversified and sustainable manner through alternative perennial crop;
 - Utilize local products for value added processing;
 - Create and utilize sustainable and renewable energy; and
 - Clean air and water with no noxious fumes or pollutants.
- Social/Community-
 - Have stable and consistent leadership;
 - Consistent community support for those in leadership;
 - Maintain a safe, healthy and attractive family environment;
 - Available space for recreational opportunities; and
 - Respect for all citizens.

Next Steps:

The next step for this project is to identify and define the processes necessary to move forward with building the Madelia Model. In collaboration with Madelia Light and Power, we have tentatively identified a renewable energy technology that will:

- ✓ provide renewable energy to the community
- ✓ utilize sustainable feedstocks
- ✓ reduce local industrial waste streams
- ✓ provide clean water
- ✓ create additional local enterprises and jobs.
- ✓ retain rural wealth

This will form the basic framework we will build the Madelia Model around. Rural Advantage is pursuing funding to develop a business plan for the Madelia project that would define the technical steps needed to move the project forward; identify various synergies to be gained from existing government/business/ industry; identify potential bio-industrial opportunities; identify and quantify the multiple benefit aspects [such as clean water, reduced wastewater treatment costs, etc.] of the project; and quantify the local economic benefits. This business plan could then be used by the local community for increasing policy, investor, or new business and industry support as the overall project moves forward.

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