



Spring 1998

Governor Gets Behind 50 MW Renewable Initiative

In an unusual display of election year dynamics, the Governor's office has signed off on an electric reliability bill (AB 940) that is virtually identical to the measure supported by RENEW and other Customers First! Coalition members (SB 418/AB 748). Among the many provisions AB 940 appropriates from SB 418/AB 748 is a 50 MW renewable energy mandate on eastern Wisconsin utilities.

Like SB 418/AB 748, AB 940 is a two-prong effort to ensure adequate supplies of electricity for Wisconsin. The first prong involves reforming the power plant approval process in line with current economic and environmental realities of power generation. Under current regulations, the PSC subjects a 50 MW gas-fired peaking unit or a 15 MW wind farm to the same level of scrutiny as a 500 MW coal plant, as though those three very different examples of power generation produce comparable levels of pollution, which of course they don't. In recognizing the trivial environmental impacts from wind generators and gas peaking units, AB 940 accelerates the approval process for power plants under 100 MW.

AB 940 also represents an effort to expedite near-term physical improvements to Wisconsin's electric grid. The bill enables utilities and independent power producers to build gas-fired power plants in Wisconsin to supply wholesale markets here and elsewhere. The bill also eases upgrading transmission lines along existing right-of-ways. Last but certainly not least, AB 980 requires significant utility investment in renewable generation units.

Under the terms of AB 980, Wisconsin Electric Power Company, Wisconsin Power & Light, Wisconsin Public Service and Madison Gas & Electric must construct or procure a total of 50 MW of generation using Wisconsin-based renewable energy resources by December 31, 2000. The four utilities would be obligated to issue requests for proposals for this need by September 1998. The bill allows utilities to recover all of the costs of these projects in retail rates, subject to prudence principles.

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LATE BREAKING NEWS FLASH!

RENEWABLE TRIUMPH IN LEGISLATURE

Producers and consumers of renewable energy won a significant victory yesterday when the Wisconsin Legislature completed approval of comprehensive legislation to ensure reliable electric service in the state. The bill, a compromise package introduced at Governor Thompson's request and strongly supported by the Customers First! Coalition, contains a

provision requiring significant investments in new renewable generators over the next three years.

"By including strong policy support for renewables in his electric reliability package, the Governor made it clear that generating electricity from clean energy sources has a bright future in Wisconsin," said RENEW

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Legislature Seals Renewable Initiative

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Wisconsin Executive Director Michael Vickerman. "We commend the Governor and the Legislature for recognizing that renewables are ready to shoulder an increasing share of the state's energy load."

Vickerman noted that the bill will enable individual and

commercial customers throughout eastern Wisconsin to participate in the emerging clean energy marketplace. "Both clean energy producers and customers who value clean energy stand to benefit greatly when this bill becomes law," Vickerman said.

While generation from

wind, solar and biomass has higher direct costs than conventional energy sources such as coal or natural gas, much of the costs are likely to be absorbed through customer-supported premium programs, Vickerman said. Wisconsin Electric Power has nearly 7,000 customers subscribing to its "Green Power" program, and Madison Gas & Electric will launch its customer-supported wind energy initiative in April.

Highlights of the Governor's Electric Reliability Proposal (AB 940)

- u Requires eastern Wisconsin utilities to procure or construct 50 MW (in total) of generating units using Wisconsin-based renewable energy resources by December 31, 2000.
- u Eliminates the permitting requirements relating to the state's Advance Plan process and changes it from a contested case proceeding administered by the PSC to a strategic energy assessment prepared by the PSC.

- u Raises the minimum size for a transmission line (on an existing right-of-way) requiring a CPCN from 100 kV to 230 kV transmission construction on new right-of-way remains status quo).
- u Requires utilities to place their transmission systems under the control of an independent system operator (ISO) by June 30, 2000. Failure to do so triggers a range of remedies that can be exercised by the PSC, including divestiture.

- u Raises minimum size for a generating unit requiring a CPCN from 12 MW to 100 MW.
- u Authorizes the construction of merchant power plants (plants built without a determination of need) for wholesale transactions only. Wisconsin utility affiliates must pass certain public-interest tests before they can legally own, control and operate wholesale merchant power plants.

Introducing the Customers First! Coalition

Customers First! is a diverse coalition of organizations representing tens of thousands of Wisconsin consumers and businesses. Coalition members are committed to responsible reform of Wisconsin's electric power industry that preserves Wisconsin's low rates and highly reliable service, sustains Wisconsin jobs and promotes environmental responsibility.

Members of Customers First! include:

- American Association of Retired People - Wisconsin
- Citizens' Utility Board
- Dairyland Power Cooperative
- IBEW Local 2304
- Madison Gas & Electric Company
- Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin
- National Federation of Independent Businesses - Wisconsin
- RENEW Wisconsin
- Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter
- Wisconsin Association of Community Action Programs
- Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives
- Wisconsin's Environmental Decade

Customers First! represents small businesses and farmers, environmental groups, labor and consumer groups, retirees and low-income families, 82 municipal electric utilities, 26 rural electric cooperatives, two wholesale suppliers and one investor-owned utility.

Governor Boosts Renewables

(continued from page 1)

In his State of the State address this January, Governor Thompson called for legislation to increase supplies of electricity in eastern Wisconsin. The Governor's request was motivated by the power shortages that cropped up repeatedly last summer while Point Beach and other nuclear power plants in the region were offline. Only voluntary cutbacks in consumption, coupled with unusually mild summer weather, kept the lights on in southeast Wisconsin.

After the summer's worst heat wave had passed, southeastern Wisconsin businesses and residents



wind, solar, small hydro, wood residues and landfill gas could provide short-term relief to Wisconsin's shaky electrical grid and, therefore, should be supported in any comprehensive program to improve system reliability.

Meanwhile, Wisconsin's largest utilities recognized a ripening opportunity to rid themselves of the yoke of regulation, at least in the generation sector. Under the guise of enhancing system reliability, the state's largest utilities proposed building, through their unregulated subsidiaries, power plants whose output could bypass Wisconsin ratepayers entirely and serve any buyer in the region. Absent certain restrictions or outright prohibitions, the owners of

Under the terms of AB 980, Wisconsin Electric Power Company, Wisconsin Power & Light, Wisconsin Public Service and Madison Gas & Electric must construct or procure a total of 50 MW of generation using Wisconsin-based renewable energy resources by December 31, 2000.

made it abundantly clear that their patience was wearing thin, and demanded a remedy to the situation. In response to constituent unhappiness, Governor Thompson asked industry representatives and other stakeholders to produce recommendations for avoiding a repetition of last summer's power shortages. Madison Gas & Electric responded with several suggested improvements to the electric system, including one to construct 50 MW of renewable generation in eastern Wisconsin.

During the height of the blackout threat, RENEW and Wisconsin's Environmental Decade launched a public education campaign to make the case for accelerating investments in renewable power sources like wind and energy efficiency. RENEW and Decade argued that renewable generators using

these unregulated subsidiaries would have a powerful financial incentive to purchase power from their own so-called "merchant" plants at a premium, which would be passed directly onto their captive customers, while simultaneously marketing some of the output to large customers in the region at below-cost prices.

Customers First! members attacked the large utilities' proposal as being highly anti-competitive and in no way responsive to Wisconsin's reliability problems. The self-interested nature of the large utilities' plan motivated Customers First! to begin working on a comprehensive reliability plan of its own. RENEW took advantage of this

development and, deploying the same policy arguments that informed our public education campaign during the summer, lobbied Coalition leaders to integrate MG&E's suggested 50 MW renewable energy mandate into its bill. The persuasion paid off, and when the Coalition's reliability legislation, SB 418/AB 748, was introduced in January, the 50 MW of renewables had become part of the package. With this provision in place, environmental organizations threw their support behind SB 418/AB 748.

By taking the initiative on legislation, the Coalition was able to mobilize the support from key constituencies such as labor, rural electric cooperatives, and even some large industries, which served to isolate the large utilities in the process. Such a broad base of support gave the Coalition considerable leverage in both the Legislature and the Governor's Office. When the latter initiated negotiations to reach a compromise, the utilities were unable to demonstrate political support for their pet proposals, most of which were wholly unrelated to improving system reliability, and they walked away from the table in mid-February.

This display of intransigence only weakened the utilities' position, however. Without a viable utility bill to pick and choose from, the Governor had no choice but to borrow liberally from the language developed by Customers First! in crafting a compromise package that would receive bipartisan

The Governor's reliability bill represents the first concrete public policy mechanism we've managed to put in place for expanding the use of clean, native renewable resources.

support. The outcome has to be regarded as a resounding victory for all of the constituencies represented by the

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- ⇒ Many thanks to Joel Gaalswyk, James Goodman, Larry Krom, Shelly Laffin, Wayne Stroessner and other members who sent letters in support of the Customers First! bill, and Chris Deisinger for representing RENEW at a Senate hearing in Milwaukee.
- ⇒ RENEW would also like to acknowledge a number of individuals were instrumental in integrating the 50 MW of renewables provision into the Customers First! bill and later into the Governor's bill. They are Lee Cullen (Customers First!), Rep. John Gard, David Jenkins (WI Federation of Cooperatives), PSCW Commissioner Joseph Mettner, Keith Reopelle (Environmental Decade), Roy Thilly (WPPI), and Mark Williamson (MG&E).

Wind Turbines Energize Eastern Wisconsin

With the commissioning process complete, Wisconsin's first utility-scale wind generators are now pumping electrons into the eastern Wisconsin electrical grid. Production from the two 600-kilowatt turbines, located in the Town of Glenmore in southern Brown County, began in early February.

At 60 meters high, these are the tallest turbines operating in the United States, although that distinction won't

and commissioned the wind machines, is responsible for maintenance. The Electric Power Research Institute and the U.S. Department of Energy also contributed funding to the \$2.1 million project under the U.S. Wind Turbine Verification program.

This installation can trace its origins to RENEW's inaugural intervention six years ago before the Public Service Commission. At that proceeding (Advance Plan 6 for all you renew-

The Town of Glenmore installation is the utilities' response to that order. Indeed, if RENEW hadn't been in existence in 1991 to intervene in Advance Plan 6, utility-scale wind generation in Wisconsin would very likely remain a dream today instead of a reality.

The turbines will be formally dedicated on Earth Day, Wednesday April 22. In recognition of RENEW's role in making this project happen, RENEW members are encouraged to come to the project site, take part in the dedication ceremony, and appreciate first-hand the positive impact that an organized constituency like ours can have on the landscape. We will also gather at some point during the festivities to dedicate a memorial to Dan Moran, who died earlier this year (see page 5).

" This installation can trace its origins to RENEW's intervention six years ago in Advance Plan 6, when we convinced the PSC that wind generation was well on its way to becoming a viable generation option for Wisconsin. "

last for very long. Their blades extend about 73 feet from the rotor, enabling the generator to be driven by the stronger winds aloft. Situated on top of the Niagara Escarpment, a geologically significant uplift paralleling Lake Michigan, these tall, long-bladed turbines are expected to generate about 3 million kWh annually, enough to satisfy the power requirements of several hundred Wisconsin households. Estimates of average annual wind speeds at hub height approach the 16 mph mark.

Situated among several 1,000-foot-high broadcast towers, the two wind turbines do not overwhelm the landscape, despite their height. Indeed, this installation, located on a dairy farm owned by Sandra and Michael Zirbel, is reminiscent of the cluster development so commonplace across Denmark and northern Germany, where many who originally settled in this part of Wisconsin came from.

Four eastern Wisconsin utilities--Wisconsin Public Service, Wisconsin Electric Power, Wisconsin Power & Light, and Madison Gas & Electric--own the wind turbines, which were manufactured by Tacke Windpower (now owned by Enron). Ontario-based Huron Windpower, which manufactured the turbine blades and installed

able energy history buffs), RENEW established that wind generation was well on its way to becoming a viable generation option for Wisconsin, and argued that utilities should begin familiarizing themselves in this emerging technology. After reviewing the testimony and briefs that RENEW's expert witnesses and counsel put on the record, the PSC in September 1992 ordered the eastern Wisconsin utilities to install one or more state-of-the-art wind turbines at a windy site.



Blade Being Lifted at Town of Glenmore Wind Turbine Installation

The turbines are located on Shirley Road, across the road from the broadcast towers and approximately 1/4 mile east of Morrison Road. The site is best approached on Highway 96, which connects with U.S. Highway 41 approximately 10 miles west and Interstate 43 approximately six miles east. For additional information, call Jayme Van Campenhout, Wisconsin Public Service Corp. at (920) 433-1823 or Michael Vickerman, RENEW Wisconsin, at (608) 255-4044.

NEXT RENEW BOARD MEETING

Wednesday April 22, 1998 (Earth Day)

High Cliff State Park Pavilion
Sherwood, WI (Calumet County)

The meeting will follow the dedication of Wisconsin's 1st windpower project in Town of Glenmore, Brown County

Meetings are open to RENEW members. If you're planning to attend, please call Michael Vickerman at (608) 255-4044

MG&E Selects Vestas Turbines for Wind Farm

Madison Gas & Electric will purchase 17 wind turbines from Vestas, a leading windpower manufacturer headquartered in Denmark, for its eastern Wisconsin wind energy project. The Vestas V-47 wind turbines have a rated capacity of 660 kW, and will be mounted on 200-foot towers, which are comparable in height to the two 600-kW Tacke turbines recently installed in Brown County.

At 11 megawatts (MW), MG&E's project will be the largest windpower installation east of the Mississippi River when it begins producing power sometime in the first half of 1999. That distinction is presently held by Green Mountain Power's 6 MW plant in Searsburg, Vermont.

The commitment to manufacture and install wind turbines for MG&E is another indication of Vestas's success in obtaining U.S. orders since unveiling its V-47 machine. Larger than the V-44 installed at Traverse City, Michigan,

the V-47 can produce power in light winds (starting at 7 mph), which makes it particularly suitable for Wisconsin installations. Before the MG&E commitment was announced, Vestas had lined up commitments to supply V-47's for an 11-MW project in Minnesota and a 75-MW project in Texas, the latter to contain 113 turbines.

In addition to selecting a manufacturer, MG&E has been working closely with Northern Alternative Energy (NAE), a Minneapolis-based wind plant developer, to measure wind speeds at the sites under consideration and develop site plans for deploying the Vestas turbines.

NAE president Greg Jaunich said that MG&E has already made an initial payment to ensure timely delivery of the turbines. Under current tax code provisions, a windpower project must be up and running by July 1, 1999, to qualify for the 1.7 cents/kWh production tax credit.

"There is a lot of activity going on with production of turbines at the moment, and a lot of manufacturers are somewhat tight [with production capacity]," Jaunich said.

While MG&E hasn't formally selected a project site yet, the utility is looking closely at several sites along a ridgetop overlooking Lake Winnebago in Calumet County. Another site under investigation is located in Kewaunee County some 30 miles east of Green Bay. The project site will be disclosed when MG&E submits an application to the Public Service Commission in early April for approval to build the windpower plant.

The average annual wind speed at the Calumet County locations under consideration are estimated at 16 mph at 200-foot elevations. A wind plant installed along the escarpment there is expected to generate 30 million kilowatt-hours.

In Memory of Dan Moran 1953 - 1998

Dan Moran, an engineer who managed and coordinated many of the Wisconsin Energy Bureau's renewable energy programs since 1985, died suddenly February 12 while playing soccer. With his departure Wisconsin's renewable energy community lost a dear friend and a valuable ally, and the state a fine public servant working for the betterment of Wisconsin's citizens and its natural environment.

While Dan was at heart a renewable energy advocate, he was quite effective in the nuts-and-bolts aspects of his work: extending technical assistance and financial support through the Renewable Energy Assistance Program, pursuing grant opportunities from the

Department of Energy, and providing a reasoned perspective on renewables as a participant in the utilities' integrated resource planning process.

Like a prospector Dan was always on the lookout for attractive ideas and proposals for promoting in-state development of renewables. Once he settled on a project worth pursuing, Dan set about persuading his colleagues and superiors to gain their support, employing his considerable charm and tenaciousness. Though he didn't always prevail, Dan never pulled his punches, no matter how slim the expectations for success were. His labors were starting to bear fruit this year. Tall tower wind monitoring

is beginning at over a dozen locations across the state, a result of Dan's success in assembling multiple funding sources for that effort.

Earlier this year, energy from two 600-kW wind generators in southern Brown County began flowing into the grid. Dan was unable to suppress his excitement as we drove up on a gray morning in late January to watch work crews assemble Wisconsin's first two wind turbines. From Dan's perspective, the project was more, much more, than a demonstration. It was confirmation that wind energy is ready for Wisconsin, and vice versa.

On the day he died the sun was shining and the wind was blowing, a welcome departure from the extended procession of slack, overcast days we'd been having. Dan was exultant. That afternoon he telephoned to say: "Those machines are really flying today." I doubt I'll ever be able to look at the rotating blades of a wind turbine without thinking of him.



Dan (on left) with RENEW President Larry Krom

Kewaunee Owners Quarrel Over Plant's Future

Despite opposition from two of the three owners of the Kewaunee Nuclear Power Plant, the Public Service Commission is leaning toward ordering the replacement of the plant's corroded steam generators. If steam generator replacement is approved, the price tag for the three co-owners--Wisconsin Public Service (WPS), Wisconsin Power & Light (WPL), and Madison Gas & Electric (MGE)--is expected to total \$90 million.

Though Kewaunee has performed reliably well over its 24-year history, the 530 MW reactor is showing signs of wear and tear. Its steam generators have experienced significant corrosion, and required extensive repairs last year before the plant could be restarted. After an experimental laser-weld repair failed, Kewaunee's owners settled on resleeving a number of tubes which had been previously plugged. When this repair technique proved successful, Kewaunee went back on line last June, barely in time for last summer's hot weather.

Since the resleeving, Kewaunee has been operating smoothly. Both MGE and WPL believe the plant can operate reliably with its existing steam generators until its license expires in 2014. In their view, the advantage of a repair strategy over steam generator replacement is that the former forgoes an up-front capital investment totaling \$90 million, which might not be recovered if the plant were shut down before 2014 or if unforeseen problems plague plant operations. The risk of not fully recovering the \$90 million investment is, in their judgment, sufficiently high enough to warrant a more flexible approach, namely repairing Kewaunee's steam generators on an as-needed basis.

Of the Kewaunee co-owners, only

WPS asserts that steam generator replacement is a less expensive option than the repair option. Other parties in the proceeding--WPL, MGE, RENEW and Citizens' Utility Board (CUB)--argued that steam generator replacement is more expensive than the alternatives.

"[U]nder the company's assumptions, there is no simply no margin for error," said CUB witness Jimmy Seidita, a financial analyst. "The plant will have to run at an extremely high capacity factor for all of its remaining life

now suppose the steam generators are not replaced, but instead retirement is planned for, say, 2007. If in the intervening period there is a sharp rise in fuel prices, there will still be the option to keep Kewaunee in operation to the end of its license."

Rather than sink \$90 million into a plant which may not be economic in five or 10 years, Kewaunee's owners would be better off diversifying their power supply portfolio with renewable energy projects as they become economic, Brower said.

Rather than sink \$90 million into a plant which may not be economic in five or 10 years, Kewaunee's owners would be better off diversifying their power supply portfolio with renewable energy projects as they become economic.

Initially skeptical of steam generator replacement, PSC Staff appears to have swung over to WPS's way of thinking. In its brief, Staff took the view that replacing steam generator replacement would improve system reliability in eastern

Wisconsin. The history of Point Beach directly refutes that contention, however. Since its steam generators were replaced in December 1996, Point Beach Unit 2 has been off-line about 75% of the time, including three weeks this March.

It is clear that PSC Staff and WPS have cast Kewaunee as the bird in the hand, and alternative generation options, including renewables, lie in the bush. But this view ignores WPS's own contention that even without new steam generators, Kewaunee can still operate reliably until 2007 and perhaps until 2013. If the probability is high that Kewaunee will still be cranking 10 years from now, then there is absolutely no need to foreclose options at this early date. Nor would there be justification for it.

The PSC is expected to issue its decision by April 1.

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with no additional outages and with 30% fewer employees just to break even on the steam generator replacement. Very good performance will not be enough ... [Anything less than absolute sustained excellence means the steam generator replacement is uneconomic.

Echoing many of the points he raised during the Point Beach steam generator case, RENEW witness Dr. Michael Brower urged the PSC to defer a decision on steam generator replacement at this time. With uncertainties such as electric utility restructuring, closer NRC scrutiny, aging plant condition and the lack of a long-term nuclear waste storage facility clouding the horizon, Brower argued that investments in nuclear energy have become substantially riskier than in years past.

"Suppose the steam generator replacement is approved, but after it is completed, nuclear O&M costs begin to rise faster than anticipated," Brower said. "There is no way to go back on the decision and recoup the investment: that option has been foreclosed. But

Nader to Keynote 1998 MREA Fair

Ralph Nader, noted consumer advocate who waged a third-party bid for the presidency in 1996, will be the keynote speaker at this year's Midwest Renewable Energy Fair. Nader will discuss a broad range of topics related to energy production and the environmental effects of fossil fuel use.

The 9th annual Midwest Renewable Energy Fair will take place from June 19th to June 21st at the Portage County Fairgrounds in Amherst, WI. Organized by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA), the fair functions as an open-air classroom dedicated to providing practical information on taking advantage of renewable energy sources.

While you're up there taking in the talks, workshops, exhibits and demon-

June 19 – 21, 1998

Amherst County Fairgrounds

Amherst, WI

strations, please make a point of dropping by the RENEW booth in Tent C. Volunteers interested in spending an hour or more tabling for RENEW should call the our office for details.

For more information, contact MREA, P.O. Box 249, Amherst, WI 54406. Phone: (715) 824-5166. E-mail: mreainfo@wi-net.com. Web site: www.msn.fullfeed.com/~hulet/.

Browse Our Web Site!

<http://www.mailbag.com/users/renew-wi>

We're on-line and some of the features on our web site are:

- u Back issues of the Renewable Quarterly on-line with updates
- u Pending legislation affecting utilities and renewables
- u Vital statistics on Wisconsin's 1st windpower plant
- u Plenty of links

Reliability Legislation

(Continued from page 3)

Customers First! Coalition, including renewable energy advocates. When the Governor's reliability bill is enacted, it will represent the first concrete public policy mechanism we've managed to put in place for expanding the use of our clean, native renewable energy resources.

Wish List

- u Two office chairs (on wheel bases)
- u One vertical 4-drawer file cabinet
- u One table (3' x 4')
- u Storage cabinet (36" to 42" tall)
- u Copy paper (with recycled content)

Contact Michael Vickerman at RENEW if you would like to donate any of the above items. All donations are tax-deductible.

WHO'S WHO AT RENEW

Larry Krom, President	Spring Green
Andy Olsen, Vice President	Madison
Tim Kay, Secretary	Madison
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Vern Ader	Mosinee
Chuck Alsberg	Neshkoro
John Frantz	Monroe
Shelly Laffin	Spring Green
Cheryl Rezabek	Brooklyn
Mick Sagrillo	Forestville
Wayne Stroessner	Random Lake

WISCONSIN RENEWABLE QUARTERLY

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RENEW Wisconsin is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose members support the appropriate use of the state's clean and abundant renewable resources for a healthier environment and economy. The *Wisconsin Renewable Quarterly* is published four times a year by RENEW Wisconsin. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **RENEW Wisconsin**, 222 S. Hamilton Street, Madison, WI 53703. Phone: (608) 255-4044.

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Say Yes to a Renewable Energy Future for Wisconsin

%

I want the energy I use to come from clean, sustainable, locally available renewable resources.

I will help RENEW make that happen.

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5 I would like to become a supporting member of RENEW. Enclosed is my check for:
5 \$ 20 5 \$ 30 5 \$ other

5 I can't afford to become a supporting member, but I'd like to make a donation.

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Address _____

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Mail to: RENEW Wisconsin, 222 South Hamilton Street, Madison, WI 53703. Thanks.

The cost of publishing and mailing this newsletter has tripled over the last three years. To help defray these costs, RENEW asks all newsletter recipients to pitch in.

If you are interested in donating supplies or equipment to RENEW, see our wish list on page 7.

We're on the Web!

<http://www.mailbag.com/users/renew-wi>

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