



In 2024 and 2025 the Golden Eagles basketball team went door to door in Crookston promoting energy efficiency, weatherization, and electrifying homes.

EMPOWER CROOKSTON

Since Fall 2023, Empower Crookston has grown into a regional partnership of organizations promoting energy conservation, decarbonization, and renewable energy projects that support economic development in Northwest Minnesota as well as helping families and cities lower their energy costs.

The four main goals of Empower Crookston are:



Reduce energy costs for families by conducting home energy audits, weatherization, and electrifying homes



Generate projects that support regional small business growth and generate jobs



Build a large geothermal system in Crookston



Build solar, wind, and battery systems regionally to stabilize critical infrastructure like schools, EMS, etc.

WHO WE ARE

Empower Crookston is made up of 10 organizations:



EMPOWER CROOKSTON'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since October 2023, Empower Crookston has done the following:

- Built a network of partners who support each other's planning, fundraising, and projects
- Successfully advocated for Polk County adopting the PACE financing program for solar on commercial buildings
- Championed 2024 legislation that created a \$1.1M grant statewide fund for Geothermal Feasibility studies. The City of Crookston was then awarded a grant for \$150,000 to look at the Woods Addition for a 70-home linked geothermal network in conjunction with street and sewer reconstructions
- Supported ag innovation by assisting local business 4H2 with developing a decarbonized process for creating ethanol from sweet sorghum for use in batteries and with applying for R&D grants
- Co-wrote a successful MPCA \$50,000 Local Climate Action Planning grant for the City of Crookston
- Co-wrote a proposal that led to a \$150,000 MNDOT Active Transportation award to Crookston for planning to improve trails, paths, and parks
- Seven people received training from the Citizens Utility Board and learned how to provide consulting services to families for how to reduce energy bills
- Co-sponsored the weekly Jolt and Jive energy conversations. Sponsored the Fall 2025 Renew Highway 2 conference at UMC

EMPOWER CROOKSTON'S PLANS FOR 2026 AND BEYOND

- Continue to grow and add partners
- Once the Geothermal System Feasibility Study is complete (likely in April), begin reaching out to residents and local businesses to discuss possible implementation
- The prototype sweet sorghum direct ethanol fuel cell is currently being built and could lead to a new local manufacturing facility
- In addition to Jolt and Jive and being at Night to Unite each year, sponsor a Spring Energy Savings event at UMC featuring energy bill consultations and ask-the-local-contractor advise, along with a variety of clean energy technologies on display
- Implement consistent community access to energy bill consulting
- Continue to look for solar/wind/battery project opportunities
- Update and upgrade our website
- Continue to co-organize upcoming shade tree plantings and prairie restoration projects in the Crookston area

GET INVOLVED!

If you are looking for a positive group of people to get involved with, who are always on the look-out for good ideas to support, Empower Crookston meets every Monday hybrid at 10 a.m. at the Valley Tech Center.

Contact City of Crookston Community Housing and Economic Development Authority (CHEDA) Executive Director Taylor Wyum at twyum@crookston.mn.us to learn more or to sign up.



Empower Crookston is looking for a community partner or partners to work with on reprising the paddling events!