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NEWS RELEASE

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Sustainability Projects Attract Delegation from Fukushima, Japan

DUBUQUE, Iowa – The City of Dubuque recently hosted a delegation from Fukushima prefecture in Japan as part of their visit to the U.S. to study alternatives to nuclear power.

The 12-person delegation was in Dubuque on Wednesday, Oct. 16, and consisted of elected representatives of the Fukushima Prefecture Congress. Fukushima drew international attention in March 2011 when an earthquake-initiated tsunami damaged the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. The group visited the U.S. as part of an effort to study safer energy alternatives in light of the nuclear disaster that occurred following the 2011 tsunami.

The delegation was hosted by City of Dubuque Sustainable Community Coordinator Cori Burbach and Green Dubuque Vice President Raki Giannakouros. Burbach said the group chose to visit Dubuque to learn more about the Smarter Electricity pilot study, a Smarter Sustainable Dubuque research project completed in 2012 and part of the City's collaboration with IBM Research. The pilot study was conducted in partnership with Alliant Energy - Interstate Power and Light Company and IBM Research and funded by a grant from the Iowa Office of Energy Independence. More than 1,200 households volunteered for the study, which allowed participating households to monitor their electric energy consumption much more frequently, instead of once a month on their utility bill. This enabled consumers to make better, more informed choices about when to use energy, and how much they use.

“The delegates from Fukushima were very interested in the technology used in the pilot study as well as community engagement, leadership support, and public engagement in the project,”

said Burbach. “While their initial focus was on the Smarter Electricity pilot, they were very interested in the broader Sustainable Dubuque story, the community’s support of renewable energy, how we are creating complete streets and accessible buildings to plan for an aging population, and the fact that young people are citing values such as a community’s commitment to sustainability when they locate here. They were extremely complimentary of the Smarter Sustainable Dubuque initiative and had many engaging questions.”

Burbach said the group’s stay in Dubuque was brief, only several hours, and their visit included stops in larger cities as well as Three Mile Island, site of the worst accident in U.S. commercial nuclear power plant history in 1979.

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