

Recharge Minnesota Participant Case Study



ZEF ENERGY

*Recharge **Minnesota** is a program that supports and publicly recognizes top companies, schools, civic leaders, and others who take specific steps to encourage greater electric vehicle (EV) adoption, consistent with statewide clean air goals. Participating organizations pledge to take action on programs that include installing EV charging stations at the workplace, promoting electric vehicles with employees and the public, and reviewing their own fleet of vehicles for opportunities to convert to electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles.*

ZEV Energy EV Program Highlights:



Installed nearly 20 DC Fast Chargers within its first year.



Completed a fast-charging corridor spanning over 150 miles from the Twin Cities to Duluth, Minnesota in 2017.



Transitioned from a solar installation company to an EV charging company.

Read ZEF Energy's profile for a complete overview on their EV initiatives.

RECHARGE | MN PROFILE

ZEF ENERGY

ZEF Energy is Minnesota's largest independently owned and operated DC fast charging installer. It is composed of software, hardware, development, and policy experts who craft smart transportation electrification solutions for organizations of all sizes.

Founder and CEO Matthew Blacker first launched ZEF Energy in 2014 as a solar installation company, and then he bought his first electric vehicle (EV), a Nissan LEAF.

"I quickly learned that there was a gap on the infrastructure side of EVs," Matthew says. "That's when I changed the solar company into an EV charging company, to help solve some of the pain point that I was personally having as an EV owner, and understanding other difficulties that consumers were facing. That was really the genesis of it."



Matthew Blacker with the ZEFNET Pro

ZEF Energy is partially owned by 30 rural electric cooperatives and the balance is owned by employees. This encourages the network to have a unique take on how they approach things, allowing for transparency with their pricing and objectives.



ZEF Energy's DC Fast Chargers | Credit: Tritium

Within the first year, ZEF installed nearly 20 Level 3 DC fast chargers and played a vital role in establishing a charging network that has allowed thousands of Minnesota drivers to feel confident making the transition to electric. In September, 2017, ZEF completed a fast-charging corridor spanning over 150 miles from the Twin Cities to Duluth, Minnesota, the first of its kind in all five surrounding states. In 2017, ZEF Energy also launched its first set of utility smart charging pilot programs to allow for data collection and residential and commercial customer choice.

While the technology behind the charging stations is important, what makes Matthew even more excited is offering EV programs that resonate with utilities and their customers. Mathew, who was born and raised in the UK, says US utilities and consumers alike stand to benefit from EV adoption, but it's not always top of mind for them. He views helping utilities to educate their customers about the advantages of EVs to be critical in widespread adoption.

For their part, utilities need to understand the economics of operating fast chargers, and the outsized effect that demand charges can have on fast charger electric bills. ZEF Energy uses charging data to show utilities that they can create new, more affordable rates for EV fast charging and still come out ahead. They also help utilities implement off-peak, "all you can eat" discount charging plans for their residential customers.

"ZEF Energy is helping small and medium sized electric utilities to grow load on their grid in a way that's beneficial to both themselves and the customers they serve," Matthew says. "As long as EV load growth is done right, we can help accelerate adoption, not just in urban areas but in our rural areas as well."



ZEF Energy's Level 2 Chargers | Credit: PRNewswire

Learn more about ZEF Energy at zefenergy.com

