

## CARING FOR CREATION NEWS

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Global climate change has been a worrisome reality for quite some time. However, as the recent releases of documentaries like *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Too Hot Not to Handle*, and *The Great Warming* indicate, our awareness of its importance has matured. Electric generation - especially from coal fire power plants - is one of the main contributors to the problem. All of us have options; we can do something to mitigate the problem. Our own Bruce Evans, who lives and works in Kalamazoo during the week, has decided to exercise one of his options. He writes this month about his decision to purchase green power. Our problems can be resolved - one decision at a time. Bruce has found one way to address the problem; we encourage you to find yours.

*Consumer's Energy is the electricity provider in Kalamazoo. Recently, they began offering a "green generation" option. According to Consumer's Energy, green power means energy generated from renewable resources. In this case, they get power from wind turbines and from burning gases (mostly methane) from decomposing landfills.*

*Wind turbines, once installed, are non-polluting and effectively harness the free power of wind energy. Some birds are killed by the spinning blades but proper siting (out of migratory bird paths) and newer designs have reduced this problem greatly. Although burning landfill gases does generate some pollutants (including carbon dioxide - probably similar to burning natural gas) uncaptured landfill gases are also pollutants. In fact, methane is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide and burning methane is far less polluting than the typical coal burning plant which emits mercury (toxic - especially to our children's developing brains) among other pollutants.*

*In Kalamazoo it was easy to sign up for green power. Consumer's Energy mailed an enrollment form to me but I chose to go online and checked the green power option for my account. There were two options:*

- 1. Buy all electric power from green sources.*
- 2. Purchase in blocks of 150KW (kilowatts). For instance, if you bought 150KW of green electricity and used 300KW of electricity per month, one half of your electric use would be green electricity. With my usage rate (fairly low), option 1 added about \$2.50 per month to my bill.*

*Why does it cost more? Upfront capital is expensive. Although wind energy is free for the taking, the turbines, tall towers, and networking are costly. Also, the purchase of green energy from third party providers adds some cost. Neither of these sources benefit from the "economy of scale" that is available to coal and natural gas.*

*Why do it? Why purchase green power? It's a tiny green step that adds incrementally to the demand for green power which will - hopefully - continue to grow, become cheaper, reduce our need for foreign oil/natural gas, and minimize our use of more polluting energy sources. All in all, it's a step toward a cleaner and safer future for all of us.*