

Agenda

Day's Host: Markus Lewe, First Mayor, City of Münster

"GHG Neutrality: Minnesota goals and pathways"

MN Commissioner Grace Arnold

"GHG Neutrality: NRW goals and pathways"

Tina Völker, head of unit for climate policy and climate protection in municipalities, NRW Ministry of Economic Affairs, Innovation, Digitalization and Energy

"GHG Neutrality: Münster goals and pathways"

First Mayor Markus Lewe, City of Münster

"Climate adaptation for municipalities"

Isabel Scherer, Coordination Office for Climate and Energy, City of Münster

Mindy Granley, sustainability officer, City of Duluth

"Green Heat"

Dr. Christof Wetter, professor of environmental technology, FH Münster University of Applied Sciences

Lise Trudeau, director of emerging technology planning, Minnesota Department of Commerce

"E-mobility"

Eckhard Schläfke, head of public transit, City of Münster utilities Stadtwerke Münster

Marcus Grubbs, planner, Office of Enterprise Sustainability, MN Department of Administration

Münster City Bus Barn



Left to right: Mayor Markus Lewe, Commissioner Grace Arnold, and Sabine Engel facilitating the discussion and sharing of climate action strategies in Münster's Historisches Rathaus (Historic City Hall).



The quiet electric bus we rode in Münster in front of the Rathaus.

Go, Go, Go, Green

Münster's impressive actions towards decarbonizing transportation

Electric busses are amazing. When ours pulled up to the curb under the red, yellow, and white flags in front of the Rathaus it made NO sound. As someone who doesn't like busses because of their nauseating smell, I was pleased to realize that electric busses do not have that smell because there is no diesel. I can well imagine that a city that composed its entire bus fleet of busses with electric ones would be much quieter and have cleaner air.

According to our guide, Eckhard Schläfke, the bus drivers enjoy driving the electric busses for two reasons: one, they are proud to be contributing to the energy revolution and doing something good for the climate, and two, the electric busses vibrate less than their diesel counter-parts. This means that driving the electric busses for a whole shift is more comfortable for them than driving the diesel busses was. This also translates to a smoother ride for the passengers, which the motion sickness prone of the delegation appreciated.

Herr Schläfke told us that right now the electric busses have a diesel backup for heat, which is used on the coldest of winter days. However, new electric busses which will have enough battery capacity to run the heat electrically are coming to the streets of Münster soon. Perhaps we will also see them in the metro areas of Minnesota soon.

Münster is also developing a program where city owned ride-share cars can be ordered to shuttle people to locations. An interesting idea for applying this concept for transporting more rural Minnesotans in bedroom communities to a bussing hub where they could then take a bus into the bigger city where they are employed. It is seeing creative innovations like this that help our leaders develop ideas for transforming public transportation, and transportation in general, in Minnesota to help us meet our climate goals and improve people's lives.



Right, Commissioner Grace Arnold (L) and Mindy Granley, Sustainability Officer for the City of Duluth (R) enjoy a ride on one of Münster's electric busses.

Left, one of Münster's city owned ride share cars for faster transport, the elderly, and parents with strollers.



Beating the Cold

Here is something we care about in Minnesota...reliable heat in the winter

The weather in Münster has been lovely: lows in the 50s, highs in the upper 60s to lower 70s. This is similar to the beautiful September weather we often experience in Minnesota, and I doubt anyone here or at home is thinking about turning on the heat. But we all know what is coming: Minnesota winters and likely a polar vortex or two. In a place where winter can be dangerously cold having reliable heat is essential.

Münster is taking an impressive multi-pronged approach to this issue.

The government decided to help the people of Münster identify where they were losing heat in their homes by doing an aerial survey and providing them with information and resources for making their homes more efficient. Münster is also exploring how multiple alternative heat sources could be combined for the

best and most reliable results, including PV, biomass, and geothermal.

Lise Trudeau, Emerging Technology Planning Director at the Minnesota Department of Commerce, shared her excitement for Minnesota to be able to pursue a similar approach because of recent legislation.

One idea for heating more efficiently that I think is fascinating is the concept of centralized heat, meaning that instead of each home or building having its own heating system, a group of homes would share a system, which would bring down the cost and improve the effectiveness of keeping our homes comfortable even in the situations where we have historically lost heat. And with things like heating pumps, according to Dr. Cristof Wetter, the same system can be used for cooling

with comparatively little energy to the demand of AC units, especially for large buildings. Hearing the experts talk about the possibilities for changing the way we regulate the temperature of our homes and buildings is exciting, and I can imagine a day -- not too far in the future -- when my home is heated without contributing to climate change.



Lise Trudeau (right) and Dr. Cristof Wetter (left) leading the discussion on efficient and green heating options.



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Pay Now or Pay More Later

German mentality on the financial costs of climate change

Something that has made an impression on me, and many other delegation members, is the overall attitude our German friends and partners have about the financial costs of climate change. First, it must be understood the various German political parties - whether they are liberal, conservative, or moderate - all discuss climate change in their platforms and what they are going to do to address it. Climate change itself is not a political polarizer in Germany. This means that German political will is put into productive dialog and implementing

climate solutions.

The Germans we met with today shared a mentality that resonated with me. They know the climate strategies they want to do are expensive, but they know that if they do nothing, they are putting a greater financial burden on future generations who will have to pay for damage caused. This struck me as similar to many of our Indigenous tribes in Minnesota, who believe we must consider the next seven generations when making decisions, particularly about climate change and the environment.

Cultural Fun Fact

Did you know...

Münster is the Bicycle Capitol of Germany! Pedestrians and bicycles share the sidewalk, instead of bicycles and cars sharing the road. Most of the sidewalks are consequently very wide by American standards. It is easy to tell where you should walk or ride: the red bricks are for bikes and the grey cobble stones are for pedestrians. Electric scooters are also popular, and travel in the bike lanes.

Senator Senjem took full advantage of the bike-ability of Münster and rode a bicycle to the Rathaus (City Hall) for our day of climate action and idea exchange talks.



Bikes residents of Münster rode to a restaurant for dinner.

Tuesday 14,
September
2021

Daily Dispatch

Issue #2

Madeline K. Lydon Reporting from Saerbeck, Germany

Agenda

Day's Hosts: *Dr. Tobias Lehberg*, mayor, City of Saerbeck and *Guido Wallraven*, technical director, Klimakommune Saerbeck

"Klimakommune Saerbeck – A city on its way to a sustainable future"

Guido Wallraven, technical director, Klimakommune Saerbeck

"Research Matters: renewable energy research at FH Münster University of Applied Sciences Research and in Minnesota"

Dr. Christof Wetter, professor of environmental technology, FH Münster University of Applied Sciences

Dr. Lee Johnston, director of operations, West Central Research and Outreach Center, University of Minnesota

"Saerbeck's focus on education"

Alfons Gunnigmann, board member, Förderverein Klimakommune Saerbeck e.V. nonprofit

Peter Engler, ASL education and learning center at Bio-Energie Park Saerbeck

"Waste management and the circular economy: a county perspective"

Kreis Steinfurt, County commissioner Landrat Dr. Martin Sommer

Eva Witthake, chief financial officer, county-owned waste management company Entsorgungsgesellschaft Steinfurt mbH (EGST)

Official ground-breaking ceremony for Enapter Campus with dignitaries

"Overview of the climate protection activities of Kreis Steinfurt county: structures, projects, goals"

Silke Wesselmann, head, climate protection and sustainability department, Kreis Steinfurt county

"Energiewelt 2050: renewable energy as a jobs engine"

Thomas Voss, board member, energy cooperative Die Energieweltwerker

"storch.energy start-up accelerator: renewable energy sector innovation and jobs"

Birgit Neyer, CEO, Wirtschafts-förderungs- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft Kreis Steinfurt (WEST mbH) business development agency

Daniel Schaschek, project manager, storch.energy

"Sustainable economic development across counties: Region 9 Development Commission"

Nicole Griensewic, executive director, Region Nine Development Commission

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Turbines at Saerbeck's Bioenergie Park.

Bioenergie Park

Saerbeck's claim to fame is peaceful and impressive

You know you are at Saerbeck's Bioenergie Park when you see the windmills.

Statuesque, with their white and red blades steadily rotating, they are simultaneously imposing and hypnotic. Watching the blades is relaxing, a sensation enhanced by the numerous and beautiful trees – this place is truly a park – and the songs of birds and the September breeze...but not the turbines.

Contrary to what I have heard people in the US saying, the windmills are silent. Even standing directly below one I cannot hear anything other than the sounds of nature, the talking of the delegation members, and the trucks and heavy equipment in the composting center.

While the windmills are the most immediately striking feature of the Bioenergie Park there is much more that contributes to the wonder of the place.

Old military munition bunkers have been repurposed to support an expansive solar

field, hydrogen research is happening here, education is a central feature, and then there is the composting.

The Bioenergie Park is the site of Steinfurt County's organic waste management facility. All the garden, food, and household waste (all households in Germany compost these items) that can be composted is brought here and digested to produce bio waste, which is either turned into fertilizer for farmers or into biogas which then powers the plant to process more organic waste.

As composting becomes more popular or mandated in certain areas of Minnesota I think we will see opportunities for operations like this one to become part of an emerging circular economy.



Left, the old military munitions bunkers Saerbeck purchased to use as platforms for the solar arrays.

Right, organic waste waiting to be processed in the organic digester.



Opportunities Arise

Saerbeck's Bioenergie Park is Bringing Opportunity to Rural Areas

Saerbeck's Bioenergie Park produces more renewable energy than the town of Saerbeck can use. This excess energy is bringing more jobs to this rural area. Enapter, a manufacturer of hydrogen electrolyzers, broke ground on a new factory today. They chose to build this factory in Saerbeck because they want to ensure their electrolyzers, which they believe will make hydrogen a more economic option for renewable energy, will be manufactured with 100% renewable energy. The factory will even be directly linked to the Bioenergie Park. This development, which will bring 300 jobs to the area, is likely going to bring more resources to Saerbeck.

Jobs are not the only opportunities stemming from the Bioenergie Park -- there are many opportunities for education for students at all levels. The Bioenergie Park has out-of-school programs for children to learn more about

the natural world, physics, chemistry, and renewable and green technologies.

University students also benefit from the Bioenergie Park. Münster University, like the University of Minnesota, has many campuses throughout North Rhine Westphalia, and one of those branches is in Saerbeck. The university students have the opportunity to learn about and do research with renewable energy, and sometimes they bring their expertise to Minnesota as international interns.

What is impressive to me about these opportunities is how central to the community the Bioenergie Park has become to Saerbeck. This one visionary idea that came to fruition has brought many benefits to the people who live there. Morris, Minnesota has learned from Saerbeck and it using the Bioenergie Park as a model, and I think many other rural communities in Minnesota could too.



Members of the delegation get a close-up look of the repurposed munitions bunkers while wind turbines generate electricity in the background.



Delegation members touring the education facilities at the Bioenergie Park.

Cultural Fun Fact

Did you know...

North Rhine-Westphalia, the state Saerbeck and Münster are in, has fourteen nature preserves, including the Rothaargebirge, Sauerland, and Siegerland forests, which combine to form Germany's single largest wooded area. Overall, the state is half pasture land and one third forest.



The Festival Town of Tecklenburg.

Reasons to go Green

Virtue isn't the only reason Germany is focused on green industries

Yesterday I mentioned that in Germany, climate change is not a political debate. It is a fact that all political parties talk about needing to address. While many Germans see the need for aggressive climate action as necessary to stop the Earth warming beyond 2 degrees Celsius, being virtuous is not the only reason so many people are embracing green industries.

Several times in our visit, our German partners have stated that one reason communities, such as Saerbeck, adopt

renewable energy is because it will actually save them money...and can even make them money.

A popular model for funding renewable energy projects is to have citizens invest in the government owned project in exchange for a return (3-5% in Saerbeck) from the sale of the excess power to the grid. This could be an attractive model for Minnesotans as more communities look for ways to reinvent their energy sources.

Agenda

Stadtwerk Münster: Municipal energy strategies and assets and tour of power plant.

York: Barracks developing a sustainable community, net zero new construction strategy, redevelopment and conversion strategies for large non-residential buildings

Sustainability & Resiliency

Recommendations: Lauren Jensen, Sustainability Coordinator for the City of Rochester



Trees on the grounds of the York Barracks, the site of a future sustainable community in Münster. Green spaces will be a defining feature of the development.

Green All Around

Münster is green in more than one sense of the word



Trees line the bike highway and many other streets in Münster.

Every day the delegation has been in Münster I have been struck by the realization that most of the time I do not feel as though I am in a city of over 300,000 people. There are a couple reasons for this, such as the lack of skyscrapers, but the main reason is the trees. Outside of the city center, almost every street in Münster is lined with beautiful old trees that provide shade and an ambiance of peace.

Vegetation is part of design in Münster and other cities in Germany. Parks, green spaces, and preserving old growth trees is prioritized in development plans. For example, there is a new rule in Münster that every flat roof must be a green roof, meaning it has dirt and on it that allows vegetation, such as grasses and flowers and the development plans for the communities at the York and Oxford barracks (former housing for the British military) are intentional about leaving as many of the beautiful old trees as possible because

they are beneficial for physical health, mental, health, and the environment and are aesthetically pleasing. These are facts, which research has proven and supported, but it does not take an expert to realize this. Many delegation members have commented about how pleasing it is to walk, bike, or ride down any street in Münster because of the trees.

Americans know that our lack of trees and other vegetation in cities is an issue that needs to be addressed, and I think Minnesota could be a leader in bringing more vegetation to our cities. One day, all our neighborhoods and business districts could feel as pleasant and inviting as the streets of Münster.



Left, electric cars charging at stations in the York Barracks.

Right, Delegation members tour the York Barracks. The buildings will be reposed into housing and kindergartens (ages 1-6) rather than demolished.



York and Oxford in Münster

Green, sustainable communities emerging from former British military barracks

Münster is undertaking an imaginative project: turning the site of former British military barracks into a sustainable community. These barracks, which were built in 1940 and used until 2014, will be refurbished and converted into housing for singles, couples, and young families rather than being torn down. As many trees as possible will be left and the plans centralize ‘garden living’. There will also be several kindergartens within the community (for children ages 1-6), one school, businesses, and access to public transportation. The goal of the project is to provide affordable but quality housing in a sustainable community.

There are three things that stand out to me about this project, and I think they are things we should do in Minnesota.

First, the commitment to incorporating

and preserving green spaces. I have already mentioned the trees – in addition to the commitment to leave them the building plans for the new construction include green roofs and green walls to help with cooling. This means letting vines grow on the structures and designing flat roofs where vegetation can grow.

Second, not all the construction will be new. The existing barracks are in good shape and are aesthetically pleasing, so rather than waste the materials and building new units, many of the apartments in the community will be in the refurbished and modernized barracks. In the US we have the tendency to tear down and rebuild, which can be wasteful, but Münster is showing that having something nice doesn’t necessitate tearing down the old.

Third, the building codes are more intense, especially when it comes to insulation. The walls and insulation layer of new construction and renovated buildings in Münster are MUCH thicker than the codes in Minnesota specify. This seems logical for us to do because it keeps the heat or cool in, which makes the buildings more efficient and saves money.

Personally, I think I would like living in a community like this one. Sustainability, green space, and energy efficient housing. What else could you ask for?



Delegation members listen to our guide at the Stadtwerk power plant.

The Impact of Habits

How do we help people understand the impact of their everyday decisions?

A point of conversation today was the impact of our daily habits and the lifestyle we are used to, particularly our energy use. We are an increasingly digital society, which requires a lot of electricity. This is a social challenge. Precipitating changes in habits is not an easy or fast process, but it is a question both Germany and Minnesota are asking when it comes to electricity use and energy conservation.

When we visited Münster’s power plant I was struck by the effort that is necessary to sustain our energy use habits. In addition to the main power generation system there are multiple redundant systems for emergencies or for periods in

the summer and winter when energy demands may be even higher than usual. The maintenance is also intensive. We happened to be there when a scheduled, routing rebuilding of one of the gas turbines was being rebuilt: a highly technical and labor-intensive operation.

Münster has a timeline in place for retiring this gas plant in favor of renewable options, but I think as many people as possible should be able to see how their electricity is generated. If more people realized how much effort is behind bringing light to their homes with a simple flip of a switch it might help precipitate changes in energy consumption.

Cultural Fun Fact

Did you know...

Kiepenkerl were traveling traders They brought food from the country farms to the cities and then returned to the rural areas with salt, other goods, and news. The name ‘kiepenkerl’ comes from the basket they carried the goods in – kiepe – and a word for person – kerl.

There is a well know restaurant called the Kiepenkerl in Münster with a sculpture of its namesake outside it. This was the site of a terror attack on 7 April 2018, when a man drove a vehicle into the outdoor area of the restaurant. Four people were killed and about 20 others were injured.



The statue of a kiepenkerl outside the Kiepenkerl restaurant.

Itinerary

Travel to Lüdenscheid

Schulte-Elektrotechnik: Guided Tour

How SMEs reduce GHG Emissions

Networking Dinner with Regional Leaders:

Welcoming Remarks - Sebastian Wagemeyer, Mayor of Lüdenscheid; Commissioner Grace Arnold, MN Department of Commerce; Sabine Engel

Panel - Doug Biehn, Council Member City of White Bear Lake; Ken Smith, president and CEO of Ever-Green Energy; Guido Wallraven, Principal Stadt-Land-Fluss Bonn; Marcus Müller, City of Lüdenscheid



Lüdenscheid is on the edge of the Bergisches Land Nature Park, which is 2,027 km².

Traveling Without a Car

If the infrastructure is there, it's easy and faster than you think



The Hagen train station where we transferred to a bus that took us to Lüdenscheid.

Today, the Delegates from Rochester and Duluth and I said good-bye to Münster. We walked in the light rain along the tree-lined bike highway - which was as full of bikers as any sunny day here - to the train station where we caught our train to Hagen. Less than an hour later (some of us may have enjoyed a quick nap) we disembarked in Hagen where we caught the direct bus to Lüdenscheid and walked to the hotel.

This trip took us about two hours, which isn't much slower than the hour and a half ride it would have been with a car.

Considering we also did not know exactly where we were going, what platform we needed to be on, or where to catch the bus, it was also simple.

On the train people were working, napping, chatting, and reading. It was time you could use to do something productive or pleasurable, which would have not been an option if one drove. The trains are also

quiet, clean, and smooth. It is a pleasant experience, and I wish Minnesota had a system connecting our major cities and university towns. It would be fun to catch the train in the Twin Cities for a weekend in Duluth, make getting to the Mayo Clinic a breeze, or be a convenient way for college students in Morris or Mankato to go home for the holidays.

True, there is a romance to trains, but as I think more about the benefits it also occurs to me that more Minnesotans traveling long distances by train, especially in winter, would probably reduce the number of traffic accidents and fatalities. It would also increase mobility for people and help us reduce our emissions from transportation. It would create a lot of construction, service, and logistics jobs.

After this experience I am now an advocate for a German-inspired train system in Minnesota, and I think my fellow Minnesotans would be on board too.



Left, spruce trees in the forest surrounding Lüdenscheid.

Right, Doug Biehn, Sam Crosby, and Dr. Wayne Kazmierczak, learn about the bark beetles.



O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum

Lüdenscheid’s spruce trees are under attack, but inspiration can be found in mitigation efforts

There are many trees in Lüdenscheid, it is on the edge of the Bergisches Land Nature Park, after all. The mix of spruce, beech, and oak is reminiscent of Minnesota, however, when you are traveling through the hills something troubling stands out. In many places, there are clear-cut areas and stands of red hued spruce. These spruce trees, which are not native to Lüdenscheid or North Rhine Westphalia, are under attack from bark beetles, and are quickly dying in large numbers.

Because the spruce trees are not native, it was decided that they would not be replaced with new spruce trees. The beech and oak trees are native, and would therefore seem a natural choice for reforestation, but there are other factors to consider.

The climate of Lüdenscheid is changing, a fact documented by the climate monitoring station at Lüdenscheid’s high school which has been in operation since

the 1800s. One of the more profound changes in Lüdenscheid’s climate is similar to a change Minnesota is experiencing: shifting precipitation amounts and patterns. This alteration in precipitation patterns effects the trees that can live in this area.

Experts are concerned that the beech and oak trees will not be able to survive in Lüdenscheid and the surrounding areas in the near future, and they are actively researching what trees might be good options to help reforest the areas the bark beetles are decimating.

While this is overall a scary scenario, I find two parts of it inspiring. First, the decision not to replace a non-native species with more of its ilk is something to applaud and something Minnesota should take note of, especially as interest in preserving pollinator habitat rises in our state. Second, that the experts are thinking ahead and planning for the future. They know people value the trees

for many reasons and they are asking how they can keep that value even with a changing climate. Conservation and mitigation can clearly go together.



Showing the damage the bark beetles do to the trees.



Spruce trees under attack from the bark beetle.

Waste Not, Want Not

Heat recovery is environmentally friendly and good for business

Schulte-Elektrotechnik, a manufacturer in Lüdenscheid, has impressive facilities, of which their heating system is the most impressive.

The factory is equipped with technology that recovers heat produced by their plastic injection machines, their air compressor, and IT modules and stores it or uses it to heat their facilities.

The installation of this system was expensive but is paying for itself by virtually eliminating the need for another heat source.

To learn more about this topic, read our interview with Ken Smith, Chief Executive and President of Ever-Green Energy, in Special Edition: Renewable Businesses.

Cultural Fun Fact

Did you know...

In Germany, you will not often automatically be brought water when you sit down at a restaurant. Usually, you need to ask for it. When you do, you will be asked if you want water “with gas or without gas” – carbonated or uncarbonated. Either way you answer, you will be brought mineral water, not tap water. And you will never be given ice.

The carbonated water here is not as heavily carbonated as in the US. It is refreshing, and more often than not, comes in glass bottles, which Germans still use with great frequency because they can be infinitely recycled.



Glass bottles are very common in Germany. We did not see nearly the amount of plastic convenience products that are in the US while in North Rhine Westphalia.

Agenda

Ceremonial Planting of First Tree of the Climate-Smart Forest

“How Germany Wants to Overcome the Climate Crisis”

Bärbel Höhn, Special Representative for Energy in Africa on behalf of Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Dr. Sabine Engel, University of Minnesota

4 Parallel Small-group Workshops

- How do we get more green electricity?
- How to get better building efficiency?
- How to make transportation cleaner?
- How to use political instruments?

Reconvene for Summaries and Final Comments



The Climate Smart Municipalities Delegation from Minnesota.



Top, Addie, the friendly dog who joined delegation members for the ceremonial planting of the first tree in the Climate-Smart Forest.

Bottom, Madeline K. Lydon (me) at the ceremonial planting of the first tree of the Climate-Smart Forest.

We are in this together

Minnesota and Germany are an ocean apart but face the same challenges

Over the past five days, the members of the Climate Smart Municipalities Delegation have learned, forged new friendships and partnerships and strengthened old ones, and shared ideas and strategies. Information has been exchanged, inspiration has visited each of us, and commitments to creating a sustainable future have been made.

Each of us will soon be returning to our everyday lives, but we will be bringing our experiences in Germany and the knowledge we have gained here with us. One of the things we have all experienced on this delegation is the universality of climate change. Prior to coming to Germany, we all knew on an intellectual level that climate change effects everyone and everywhere on Earth, but in Germany we experienced this truth and now know it on a deeper level. Like Minnesota, Lüdenscheid is experiencing dramatic and devastating changes to precipitation patterns, which destroys property and infrastructure, takes

lives, decimates landscapes, and changes traditions. Like Münster, Minnesota is facing the challenge of keeping people cool and warm in increasingly extreme temperatures.

Every delegation member now knows that we are not alone in being negatively impacted by climate change; but after this trip, each of us also knows we are not the only ones working to make a difference in its trajectory. Like Saerbeck, we can revolutionize our energy and waste systems to decrease greenhouse gas emissions, waste less, and reuse more. Like Münster we can increase emissions free mobility and bring reliable heat to people in winter. Like Lüdenscheid we can center sustainability goals in all city services and bring industry into the renewable revolution. And we don’t have to start from scratch. Our generous partners in Germany are here to help us, because we really are all in this together.



Left, delegation members create new friendships and solidify old ones.

Right, Mayor Kim Norton of Rochester and Bürgermeister Stefan Streit of Tecklenburg forge a new connection.



Inspiration and Aspiration

Bärbel Höhn shares Germany’s strategies for climate action

Today, the members of the Climate Smart Municipalities Delegation were privileged to receive an informative primer on Germany’s progress towards and strategies for achieving its climate goals from Bärbel Höhn, Energy Commissioner for Africa of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and member of the Green party.

Commissioner Höhn touched on many things, but some of the most interesting were the policy strategies Germany has or is pursuing in order to meet its aggressive goals of 65% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, 88% reduction by 2040, and achieving climate neutrality by 2045. She explained that these new targets came from a ruling by the German court that young people were correct in

their assertion that the German government was not moving fast enough to combat climate change and ensure that young people would have a safe.

Here are some generalized highlights, which also summarize the themes of the Delegation:

- Eliminate harmful subsidies.
- Implement a carbon tax.
- Invest in renewable energy.
- Expand transportation and design walkable and bikeable communities.
- Educate the public to raise awareness.
- Build coalitions of citizens, industry, politicians, and regulatory agencies to find solutions.

These are simple things on paper, but we all know that in reality it is often difficult to enact societal, economical, and political change. However, things are already happening in Minnesota, and I think this week has renewed everyone’s conviction to go home and get to work.



Dr. Sabine Engel welcomes and introduces Commissioner Bärbel Höhn.



Delegation members sit amongst an art installation of paper waste from Lüdenscheid and listen to Commissioner Bärbel Höhn.

Cultural Fun Fact

Did you know...

It is tradition for the friends and family of the couple to break porcelain the night before a wedding in Germany. The custom, called Polterabend, is thought to bring good luck to the marriage. It may have originated to ward off evil spirits.

Thank you to Elke Wirtz, Office for International Affairs, Europe, and City Partnerships at the City of Münster for telling us about this tradition.



Some beautiful flowers outside the Kiepenkerl restaurant in Münster.

Alles Gute zum Geburtstag!

A very Happy Birthday to Patrice Bailey, Minnesota Department of Agriculture Assistant Commissioner!

We hope you had a great day and wish you a life of happiness and health!

