R9 REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

DAILY RECAP

Stadwerke Münster's Electric Buses: Protecting the Climate and the Economy

Münster is the largest city in Germany without a tram system. Because of this, buses play an increased role in their public transit. This was a concern as the city turned its focus to climate protections. The city began to look at electric buses as a possible solution.

When the topic of electric vehicles gets raised, it is usually met with concerns about the cost. For Stadtwerke Münster, electric buses provide climate protection while saving the city money in maintenance costs. Although the initial cost of electric buses is roughly twice the cost of a diesel bus, the cost to maintain them is 20% lower. After 10 years of being in service, the electric buses will hit their "break-even point" and become a net positive for the city's budget.

Stadtwerke Münster decided to invest in a pilot program, purchasing electric buses from a Dutch manufacturer. The new buses quickly proved to be a great investment for the area, and they began to produce the buses in Germany.

Before the buses could hit the streets, there were a few bridges to cross. The city first needed money and a connection to the grid as well as political support. Once these issues were addressed, the city moved full speed ahead.

There are currently 200 buses in operation and 38 of them are electric. Stadtwerke Münster has made it a goal to convert to all electric by 2029. A full electric fleet will not only save the city money in the long run, but it will also help ease energy concerns in the future.

These buses can be a solution to creating clean energy. In the near future, electric buses will be used to add capacity back into the energy grid. They will become essentially energy storage systems on wheels. At peak times, they will become a revenue stream for Münster.

The city's electric buses show how clean energy is good for the climate and the economy.

Welcoming Communites in St. James and Senden

The City of Senden welcomed the Region Nine Delegation to have an exchange of ideas on welcoming communities. The City of Münster and surrounding towns have recently been presented with an influx of refugees fleeing from Ukraine. Throughout the regional, Federal and local government institutions have played integral roles in providing services to newly settled Ukraininas. Conversations with Region Nine's German counterparts produced fruitful conversations about what it means to be German, to be American, and to be an immigrant.

Sue Harris, Luisa Trapero, and Pat Branstad from St. James, MN presented their efforts to cultivate an inclusive atmosphere through their community group, Uniting Cultures/Uniendo Culturals. Uniting Cultures/Uniendo Culturas grew from a gradual demographic shift, resulting in a splintered community. German society is currently facing similar issues, and were interested to hear about the initiatives taken by the community of St. James to address the topic of cultural inclusion.

As the German representatives shared, society is in a permanent state of change. Uniting Cultures/ Uniendo Culturas has embraced this principle, and created a clear path for the community of St. James to create their own definition of Minnesota culture.

IHK Nord Westfalen's Clean Energy Economy

North Rhine- Westphalia was once home to coal mining communities and is now leading the transition to a more sustainable economy. A major player in this story has been their Chamber of Commerce or in German, the Industrie – Handel Kamer (IHK). This regional organization was the focus of the delegation's Monday morning where they heard about IHK's work on green heat, battery research, and energy pathway planning.

One of their latest projects is the development of a battery research and production facility closely tied to the university, FH Munster. In its final state, the Gigawatt scale plant will be a space for researchers from around the world to bring the energy storage systems of the future from concept to commercial production.