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Summary: 2134

(November 4, 2005)-The University of Minnesota, Morris is one of only 11 sites selected to receive funding for the Biomass Research and Development Initiative, a joint effort of the USDA and the Department of Energy. The UMM award will benefit the biomass gasification project, a comprehensive demonstration of a community-scale biomass energy system.

"We're excited to partner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Energy, and are pleased to accept this award," said Lowell Rasmussen, associate vice chancellor for physical plant and planning at UMM. "This will enhance the funding already received for this project from the Minnesota Legislature and University of Minnesota. This partnership also meets (University of Minnesota) President Bruininks' initiatives for a sustainable campus."

"This cooperative conservation partnership benefits our nation with enhanced energy security, a cleaner environment and revitalized rural economies," said Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns in making the announcement. "The selected projects support President Bush's goal to enhance renewable energy supplies."

UMM received funding as part of its 2005 capital request to build a facility in which to house the demonstration project. While the funding received from the Minnesota Legislature will be used for biomass gasification equipment to be added to the UMM district heating and cooling system , this new money will be used for developing tools and technology promoting further adaption of the biomass systems across the state and nation.

Included in the Biomass Tool Box will be:

1. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for biomass gasification systems.

2. Best Management Practices (BMPs) for biomass cropping systems.

3. Templates for Market Contracts and Pricing Structures based on biomass feedstocks.

4. Measurement of Financial and Economic Impacts.

5. Development of State and Federal Environmental Permitting Procedures for biomass gasification systems.

6. Guidelines to Initiate the Sustainable Harvest, Storage, Processing, and Delivery of a portfolio of feed stocks.

7. Worldwide Information Transfer via Web Monitoring of energy production, efficiencies, and emissions. The information transfer will be enhanced with Web SCADA systems, Web cameras, Capstone Classes, workshops, and published reports.

UMM partnered in the application process for the award with the West Central Research and Outreach Center, the USDA–ARS (Agricultural Research Service)-North Central Soil Conservation Research Laboratory, Chippewa Valley Ethanol Company , Otter Tail Power Company, the University of Minnesota, and IREE (Initiative for Renewable Energy and the Environment). Over 600 applications were submitted for the award.

The UMM Biomass Gasification System, when completed, will provide over 80 percent of the UMM campus heating and cooling needs. The system is designed to utilize a wide variety of biomass fuel including agricultural residues such as corn stover / stalks and small grain straw. The overarching goal is to develop a model for environmentally benign, efficient, and economical energy systems that can utilize local energy resources.