5-7-2009

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Campus partners with McKinstry to realize vision for 2010

Summary: The University of Minnesota, Morris has partnered with McKinstry, a leading design/build construction, engineering, energy services and facilities management firm, to help achieve the campus vision for 2010 of carbon neutrality and energy self-sufficiency.

(May 7, 2009)-The University of Minnesota, Morris has partnered with McKinstry, a leading design/build construction, engineering, energy services and facilities management firm, to help achieve the campus vision for 2010 of carbon neutrality and energy self-sufficiency.

The first large-scale wind research turbine constructed at a U.S. public university and located at the West Central Research and Outreach Center overlooks the Morris campus. The 1.65 MW wind turbine supplies power to nearly all of the campus’ buildings.

An on-campus biomass reactor will use corn stover (stalks) from the region’s farmers to generate steam to meet 80 percent of the campus’ heating and cooling needs. This demonstration and research facility will help generate new knowledge about biomass technology. Morris’ goal is to develop an integrated energy platform on a community scale that takes advantage of wind and biomass technologies.

To further assist these efforts, the campus hired McKinstry’s Minnesota team, located in Brooklyn Park, Minn., to conduct a thorough analysis of the campus’ energy supply and demand which included an evaluation of campus energy supply side options identifying demand side reductions creating a plan for an energy education and awareness system and formulating a plan for actively managing energy production, storage, and consumption.

McKinstry’s completed energy analysis of the Morris campus resulted in the development of the Carbon Management Tool—an interactive predictive tool that visually demonstrates impacts and interactions between a multitude of conservation, energy storage, and supply side options.

"McKinstry used the tool to help us identify a self-funding project with a 14-year payback,” said Lowell Rasmussen, the campus’ vice chancellor for finance and facilities. “Not only has this resolved the campus’ chilled water shortage, but it will reduce our carbon emissions by more than 80 percent by 2010. This will allow us to purchase carbon offsets for the remaining carbon footprint, and achieve our goal of becoming carbon neutral.”

The University of Minnesota, Morris has been advancing sustainable, environmentally friendly initiatives that now touch nearly every aspect of campus life—from power, food, water and transportation to waste stream infrastructure, academic study and quality of life. The Morris campus’ commitment to environmental stewardship has grown to levels of national leadership, and it holds active membership in the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and the Upper Midwest Association for Campus Sustainability (UMACS).

McKinstry projects in the State of Minnesota and across the nation have collectively eliminated 247,025 metric tons of
CO2 emissions since 2001, which is equivalent to removing 45,243 cars from US highways or offsetting the energy use of 21,803 homes or conserving 28,039,163 gallons of gasoline or saving 1,723 acres of forest from destruction or recycling 85,181 tons of waste instead of sending it to the landfill.

The University of Minnesota, Morris is one of five campuses of the University of Minnesota and is located on the prairie of west central Minnesota. The Morris campus is an undergraduate, residential public, liberal arts college that prepares its graduates through experiences and opportunities in and beyond the classroom including undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad and internships. The Morris campus is a national leader in sustainability initiatives with a vision of energy self-sufficiency and carbon neutrality by 2010. Morris: a renewable, sustainable education. Learn more at Green Campus.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.