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**WIRED Grant Funds to Develop Biomass Gasification Course**

*Summary: University of Minnesota, Morris Continuing Education has been awarded a grant of $174,258 by the Renewable Energy Marketplace - Alliance for Talent Development initiative. The funding will be used to develop new curriculum in biomass gasification technology.*

(March 13, 2009) University of Minnesota, Morris Continuing Education has been awarded a grant of $174,258 by the Renewable Energy Marketplace - Alliance for Talent Development (MNREM) initiative. Pending transfer of funds from the Department of Labor to the Renewable Energy Marketplace-Alliance for Talent Development, the funding will be used to develop new curriculum in biomass gasification technology which will serve participants during an intensive three-week pilot to be offered in May 2009 on the Morris campus. Participants will include four-year students from Morris, two-year students from Minnesota West Community and Technical College (MN West), undergraduate students from other institutions and working adults who seek training and employment in biomass gasification.

The Morris campus will develop biomass gasification technology curriculum through a unique partnership with MN West, University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC), Nova-Tech Engineering (Nova-Tech), Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc. – Architects and Engineers (HGA) and Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (CEP). Morris’ industry partners—HGA and Nova-Tech—have experience and expertise in biomass development and will guide the curriculum development to ensure that the course meets the needs of current and prospective employers.

MNREM is one of 39 regional projects throughout the country that is funded through the United States Department of Labor WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) Initiative. The primary goal of this U. S. Department of Labor-funded initiative is to achieve long-term sustainable economic vitality and compete in a global economy through the attraction, creation and retention of an educated and skilled workforce. MNREM proposals were solicited from businesses and organizations in the 36-county MNREM region to present innovative concepts for addressing the talent development needs to transform the region from primarily agriculture-dependent to a knowledge and innovation-based economy that capitalizes on the region’s strength in agriculture and renewable/alternative energy.

For more information about the Morris course, ESci 1131 Renewable Energy with Biomass Gasification, request registration materials or inquire about scholarships, contact Karen Cusey at 320-589-6461, 800-842-0030 or visit the course [Web site](#).

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 [Morris 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.