



# NEWS RELEASE

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## University of Minnesota Awarded Grant by U.S. Forest Service

PRINCETON, WV— Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Director Kathryn Maloney announced the awarding of more than \$1.5 million in grants to 23 competitively selected projects. The grants from the U.S. Forest Service encourage innovation and the sharing of processing and marketing knowledge among wood products manufacturers in the Eastern United States. The primary goal of the grants is to keep local wood businesses globally competitive and sustainable.

The University of Minnesota Duluth received an \$89,500 grant to help the firewood industry successfully implement a heat treatment process that will reduce the spread of invasive insects such as the emerald ash borer. When firewood is treated with heat, one practical concern is estimating how long it takes the firewood to reach the lethal temperature of 160 °F based on USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service standards. This study will evaluate temperature sensors and probes as well as data logging systems, and then develop a temperature monitoring system that is suitable for heat treatment operations at different scales. Knowledge gained through this project will be shared with firewood producers through on-site demonstrations and workshops.

When announcing the selected grants Maloney said, "A vibrant forest products industry is vital to sustaining healthy hardwood forests. These grants will assist American-based forest products industries remain competitive in the global market place. The projects selected this year address a diverse spectrum of industry needs including economic competitiveness, woody biomass utilization, urban wood utilization and invasive species control, and education."

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Through the grant program, WERC develops partnerships with state forestry agencies, universities, the forest industry, and others to advance workforce skills and resource management opportunities. The funds awarded by WERC are leveraged with partner contributions to initiate projects. The 23 projects selected this year provide matching funds in excess of \$1.9 million.

Selections were based on a number of factors, including consideration of whether the project or grant recipient could:

- Maintain the economic competitiveness of hardwood industries.
- Bring information and technology to existing and emerging businesses that develop and manufacture wood products.
- Bring marketing and business-related skills to existing and emerging wood products businesses.
- Encourage the adoption of new technology to improve competitiveness and profitability.
- Provide support and key information to entrepreneurs and start-up businesses.
- Address global issues and assist communities and industries facing threats from invasive species, such as the emerald ash borer.
- Increase the use of woody biomass for domestic energy use.

Funding is provided through the U.S. Forest Service Wood Education and Resource Center, located in Princeton, WV., and administered by the agency's Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry organization. The Center works with the forest products industry toward sustainable forest products production for the eastern hardwood forest region. It provides state-of-the-art training, technology transfer, networking opportunities, applied research, and information. For more information, visit <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/werc/>.

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