



NEWS RELEASE

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Technical Assistance Team helps businesses see benefits of using woody biomass systems

PRINCETON, WVa— The U.S. Forest Service Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) is leading the way in rediscovering that woody biomass is an efficient, cost-effective energy source.

WERC established a Woody Biomass Technical Assistance Team to help facility owners and managers who are considering using woody biomass to reduce their heating costs.

“Referrals come to us through partners that identify facilities that might benefit from having a woody biomass system. The first step is to conduct a preliminary feasibility study of the site. We then prepare a detailed analysis of the system that will best fit the needs of those facilities that pass the preliminary study,” said WERC Woody Biomass Coordinator Lew McCreery.

Coordinators of one recent project held a groundbreaking ceremony in March in northwestern Pennsylvania. The team recommended that three adjacent facilities install a combined heat and power woody biomass system that will produce electricity.

When completed, the new energy system will save 80 percent of the annual cost of natural gas and 15 percent of the cost of electricity, or a projected savings of about \$200,000 each year.

Mike Palko, a Biomass Energy Specialist with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, meets with interested organizations to explain the positive impacts of having an energy system fueled by woody biomass. “During the meeting, I offer to have the Technical Assistance Team conduct a free prefeasibility study,” said Palko.

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“In June I took one of the team members to six sites throughout Pennsylvania to begin work on prefeasibility studies. They will return this fall to visit additional sites,” said Palko.

Using woody biomass can significantly reduce a facility’s carbon footprint. Using a sustainable fuel like woody biomass also increases the Nation’s energy independence.

The team has conducted feasibility studies at over 100 facilities that are considering converting to wood energy sources. The team determined that more than 50 of these facilities can use woody biomass to reduce their fuel costs and carbon emissions.

In Missouri, the team worked with the Missouri Department of Conservation to review funding applications from 12 schools. The team provided a technical review of each site and developed a preliminary design for each facility.

The Technical Assistance Team also recently helped McCreery develop responses to a new EPA boiler rule. Using a technical analysis provided by the team, the Forest Service effectively convinced the EPA to make changes in its boiler rule that favored the use of wood as a solid fuel.

The Wood Education and Resource Center is located in Princeton, WVa. It is administered by the U.S. Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry. The Center works with the forest products industry on sustainable forest products production in the 35 States of the eastern hardwood forest region. WERC provides state-of-the-art training, technology transfer, networking opportunities, applied research, and information. Visit www.na.fs.fed.us/werc for more information about the center.

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