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Local Businesses Partner to Implement Renewable Energy Project
- Unique partnership between Gundersen Lutheran and City Brewery uses biogas to generate renewable electricity -

LA CROSSE, Wis. (Feb. 4, 2008) – A \$250,000 biogas grant, awarded by Focus on Energy, will help fund a unique renewable energy collaboration between Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation and City Brewery. The renewable energy project, a biogas-fueled engine-generator system, will be owned by the Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation and located at the City Brewery. Gundersen Lutheran’s vision is to provide “green energy” to the La Crosse community by selling renewable electricity to Xcel Energy.

City Brewery has been operating an anaerobic digester to manage waste from the brewing process and currently burns off the biogas that is produced. Gundersen Lutheran’s new biogas-fueled engine-generator system will use the biogas, instead of burning it off, to generate more than 4,900,000 kilowatt hours a year (kWh/yr), enough energy to power 492 average Wisconsin homes.

“This project will prove to be mutually beneficial,” said Larry Krom, project manager for Focus. “With the new biogas-fueled engine-generator system in place, City Brewery will be able to take advantage of excess heat from the engine, making its anaerobic digester more efficient, resulting in increased biogas production.”

The project, which is expected to be complete by September 2008, will not only offer energy and waste management advantages, it will have a positive effect on the environment. The annual environmental benefits of the project are equivalent to offsetting 2,452 tons of coal from being burned thereby eliminating 5,884 tons of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO2) from being released into the atmosphere, the equivalent of removing 792 cars from the road.

In addition to the biogas grant, Focus on Energy also funded a feasibility study for the project, performed by ATI Technologies of Brookfield, Wis., and has awarded Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center a \$49,000 grant to install a 28.2 kilowatt (kW) solar electric system. The solar electric system, to be installed by Full Spectrum Solar, is estimated to produce 32,754 kWh/year and should be complete by April 2008. And they aren’t stopping there, Gundersen Lutheran also plans to install a 64-panel solar hot water system with the assistance of Focus on Energy.

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"Focus on Energy has a network of experts across the state and offers a variety of programs to help plan, finance and install renewable energy systems," explained Don Wichert, Focus on Energy Director of Renewable Energy Program. "Because of incentives like our biogas grant, a growing number of Wisconsin companies like Gundersen Lutheran are using renewable energy."

To learn more about Focus on Energy and its Renewable Energy Program, or to find out if you qualify for financial incentives call (800) 762-7077 or visit focusonenergy.com.

About Focus on Energy

Focus on Energy works with eligible Wisconsin residents and businesses to install cost effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Focus information, resources and financial incentives help to implement projects that otherwise would not get completed, or to complete projects sooner than scheduled. Its efforts help Wisconsin residents and businesses manage rising energy costs, promote in-state economic development, protect our environment and control the state's growing demand for electricity and natural gas. For more information call (800) 762-7077 or visit focusonenergy.com.

About Gundersen Lutheran

Gundersen Lutheran is a health system serving 19 counties in western Wisconsin, northeastern Iowa, and southeastern Minnesota. As the largest employer in western Wisconsin, Gundersen serves its patients through the main medical center and 27 satellite medical and specialty clinics, as well a nursing home and affiliate ambulance service.

About City Brewery

City Brewery of La Crosse operates in the original Heileman Brewing Company building which opened in 1858. Since then, the Brewery has served as a source of economic growth and community pride for La Crosse residents. The Brewery was recently ranked fifth in the nation in an industry wide recognition of domestic producers of beer and malt beverages.

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