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**Focus on Energy Announces Schools and Communities to Receive
Free Biomass Heating Studies**

-16 schools from nine communities selected for biomass heating studies-

MADISON, Wis. (March 25, 2009) – The Focus on Energy sponsored “Fuels for Schools and Communities” biomass heating initiative announced the selection of nine communities (totaling 16 schools and community buildings) in Wisconsin to receive free feasibility studies and up to \$250,000 each in grants if communities choose to implement biomass systems. The initiative's goal is to jump start the installation process of state of the art biomass heating systems by selecting communities to serve as models for others. The studies are to be completed by May 15, 2009 and construction of the biomass heating systems is expected to take place soon after, if warranted.

“Biomass heating for schools and communities makes sense from many perspectives,” said Don Wichert, director of the renewable energy program. “Using locally stored renewable biomass energy is a great way for communities to utilize the resources they have in the immediate vicinity, taking advantage of the environmental and economic benefits.” He added, “One of the consequences of this effort is to keep energy dollars flowing within the communities by building sustainable energy delivery infrastructures that employ local people. The biomass heating systems being considered will include automated controls and sophisticated pollution control equipment.”

The “Fuels for Schools and Communities” initiative is a unique effort coordinated through a contract with the Biomass Energy Resources Center (BERC), a Vermont based biomass think tank and community scale organizing group. The feasibility studies are to take about two months and will be performed by the BERC with the assistance of the Wisconsin engineering firm URS Corporation of Milwaukee.

Funding is provided by Focus on Energy and other partners, including Wisconsin's Office of Energy Independence, University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives and the US Department of Energy.

FOCUS ON ENERGY ANNOUNCES SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES TO RECEIVE FREE BIOMASS HEATING STUDIES

-PAGE 2-

The communities and schools selected include:

- Antigo High School and McKenna Aquatic Center
- Ashland (High School, Elementary School, Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College and Memorial Hospital)
- Barron Riverview Middle School
- Crivitz High School
- Eau Claire (North High School and DeLong Middle School)
- Marathon Elementary
- Marshfield High School
- Muscoda (High School, Middle School and Elementary School)
- Tomahawk (UW-Stevens Point Treehaven)

“The Wisconsin ‘Fuels for Schools and Communities’ initiative is a new program whose goal is to assist Wisconsin in completing model renewable energy projects and encourage communities to convert from fossil fuel to renewable energy. We look forward to learning together on this effort,” said Judy Ziewacz, Director the Wisconsin Office of Energy Independence.

To learn more about the “Fuels for Schools and Communities” initiative, call (800) 762-7077 or visit focusonenergy.com/biomassfuels.

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 be 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 the Biomass Energy Resource Center

The Biomass Energy Resource Center (BERC) is an independent, national nonprofit organization that assists communities, colleges and universities, state and local governments, businesses, utilities, schools, and others in making the most of their local energy resources. BERC seeks to achieve a healthier environment, strengthen local economies, and increase energy security across the United States through the development of sustainable biomass energy systems at the community level. biomasscenter.org.

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