



..... **for immediate release**

Media Contacts: Robyn Nowak/Tim Wirtz
Hoffman York
(414) 225-9520/(414) 225-9522
rnowak@hyc.com
twirtz@hyc.com

.....

Focus on Energy Announces \$2.5 Million Renewable Energy Program for Schools and Communities

MADISON, Wis. (Dec. 8, 2008) – Focus on Energy, Wisconsin’s energy efficiency and renewable energy initiative, announced today the inception of a new renewable energy program called Fuels for Schools & Communities. The new program is meant to help Wisconsin schools and communities save hundreds of thousands of dollars in energy costs by switching from natural gas to heating their buildings with wood or other biomass.

“Schools and local governments today are feeling squeezed by energy prices. This new program will allow interested school districts and local governments, especially in the north and southwest portions of the state, the ability to adopt biomass technology as a cost effective and environmentally responsible solution to increasing energy costs,” said Don Wichert, director for Focus on Energy’s Renewable Energy Program.

The new program offers interested schools and communities pre-feasibility studies and feasibility studies at no cost and up to \$250,000 toward the implementation of a biomass system. The program complements Clean Energy Wisconsin, Governor Doyle's strategy to strengthen Wisconsin's energy future. This comprehensive plan moves Wisconsin forward by promoting renewable energy, creating new jobs, increasing energy security and efficiency and improving the environment.

A recent study funded by Focus on Energy and conducted by the Biomass Energy Resource Center (BERC), “*Heating with Biomass: A Feasibility Study of Wisconsin Schools Heated with Wood,*” found that as many as 25 percent of Wisconsin schools could save hundreds of thousands of dollars in energy costs by switching from natural gas to heating their buildings with wood, or other biomass. Biomass, a renewable resource, typically consists of clean wood chips, wood pellets, switchgrass or other agricultural based pellets. This is a significant finding considering Wisconsin schools spend close to \$200 million a year on energy costs.

- more -

FOCUS ON ENERGY ANNOUNCES \$2.5 MILLION RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

-PAGE 2-

The study concludes that the annual energy costs from wood biomass systems could be 29 percent to 57 percent less expensive than natural gas and save schools between \$53,000 and \$75,000 annually, depending on current fuel prices. The study included case studies from Barron, Hayward, Shell Lake and Rice Lake, Wis., high schools.

The Fuels for Schools & Communities program is funded by Focus on Energy. Its partners include: Office of Energy Independence, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands. The BEREC is coordinating the program with assistance from AECOM of Green Bay.

“Wisconsin’s Fuels for Schools & Communities is a great program for schools interested in charting a path away from fossil fuels to renewable energy,” said Wichert. “We’re pleased to partner with the Biomass Energy Resource Center to promote the use of Wisconsin grown renewable energy.”

To learn more about biomass for schools, download the *Heating with Biomass: A Feasibility Study of Wisconsin Schools Heated with Wood* study from focusonenergy.com/biomassforschools. To learn more about the new Fuels for Schools & Communities program, 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 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.

<http://www.biomasscenter.org/>

FOCUS ON ENERGY ANNOUNCES \$2.5 MILLION RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

-PAGE 2-

About AECOM

AECOM is a professional services firm specializing in site planning, design and construction engineering. Recognized for our capabilities in complex foundations, construction services, site development, facilities support and transportation engineering, AECOM helps clients succeed with unique and complex projects around the world. As a part of AECOM, the organization has more than 41,000 employees worldwide and is a leader in all the key markets it serves.

###