



December 10, 2008

Dear School and/or Community Leader,

We encourage you to explore how you may be able to save your school or community tens of thousands of dollars in annual heating costs by switching to local, renewable energy.

Focus on Energy, together with the national nonprofit Biomass Energy Resource Center, today announced a new renewable energy program, Fuels for Schools and Communities, that can save Wisconsin schools and communities hundreds of thousands of dollars in lifetime energy costs by switching from natural gas to heating their buildings with wood or other biomass.

Schools and communities that act now will receive pre-feasibility studies and feasibility studies at no cost subject to meeting certain eligibility criteria. Through a competitive process, ten school or community projects will receive full feasibility studies at no cost and up to \$250,000 for implementation.

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. To learn more about biomass heating or to find out how your school can participate in these financial incentives, please call us at 800.762.7077.

A recent study of 1,239 Wisconsin schools found that biomass heating can be more cost effective than natural gas. The study, funded by Focus on Energy, "Heating with Biomass: A Feasibility Study of Wisconsin Schools Heated with Wood," evaluated the current cost of space heating in Wisconsin schools compared to the costs of using biomass resources to supply heat. A copy can be downloaded at [focusonenergy.com/biomassforschools](http://focusonenergy.com/biomassforschools).

Results showed that up to 300 of the schools studied could save hundreds of thousands of dollars in lifetime energy costs by switching from natural gas to heating their buildings with wood or other biomass. Such savings can apply to community or municipal buildings as well.

*over*

*An initiative of*

**Biomass Energy  
Resource Center**

*in cooperation with*

**Wisconsin Department  
of Public Instruction**

**Wisconsin Department  
of Natural Resources**

**Wisconsin Department  
of Agriculture, Trade and  
Consumer Protection**

**Wisconsin Board of  
Commissioners of  
Public Lands**

**Public Service  
Commission of  
Wisconsin**

*with funding from*

**Focus on Energy**

**Office of Energy  
Independence**

**University of Wisconsin  
Center for Cooperatives**

**United States**

**Department of Energy**

Biomass, a renewable resource, typically consists of clean wood chips, wood, or agricultural-based pellets. The study found that wood biomass systems could reduce energy costs by 29 percent to 57 percent compared to natural gas, saving each school between \$30,000 and \$80,000 annually, depending on current fuel prices. Savings over the life of the system (30 years) could top \$525,000 to \$1.5 million compared to natural gas systems.

Today, 11 schools and more than 200 businesses in Wisconsin use biomass for heating, including Barron, Hayward, Shell Lake, and Rice Lake high schools. If you would like to explore this opportunity, projects will be selected on a first come, first serve basis.

Enclosed is information about financing from the State Trust Fund Loan Program, a division of the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands. The application process is easy and more than 95 percent of the interest paid on these loans is returned to public schools each year as library aid.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

Department of  
Public Instruction

Tia Nelson, Executive Secretary



Board of Public Commissioners  
of Public Lands

Judy Ziewatz, Executive Director



Office of Energy  
Independence

Eric Callisto, Chairperson



Public Service Commission  
of Wisconsin

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