



Harvesting Clean Energy eNews Bulletin

Working with Northwest farmers, ranchers and rural communities to produce clean energy

December 2004 – Newsletter #8

Now that next year's federal allocations have been set, attention is turning to upcoming legislative sessions in all four Northwest states. Look for a number of exciting policy proposals, and new business announcements in the months ahead. Until then, be sure to get your registration in for the [Fifth Harvesting Clean Energy Conference](#), January 20-21 in Great Falls. Register by January 9 to take advantage of early [registration](#) rates!

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Federal Update

Renewable Energy Appropriations Set for FY 2005

The \$388 billion omnibus budget bill signed by President Bush on December 8 finally determined appropriations for a variety of federal energy programs. The measure provides \$23.3 billion for DOE, with renewable energy resource programs getting \$389 million (including \$82 million for biomass and biofuels, \$26 million for geothermal, \$86 million for solar energy, and \$42 million for wind). Funding levels are generally similar to last year's appropriations. Allocations to the USDA for 2002 Farm Bill Energy Title programs were also set:

- **Value-Added Producer Grants** (Sec 6401) – \$15.5 million (amount requested by House, slightly above funding recommended by Administration and Senate but still far below \$40 million authorized by Farm Bill, program amended to allow renewable energy systems to qualify for grants)
- **Federal Procurement of Biobased Products** (Sec 9002) – \$1.5 million (slightly above Administration and Senate \$1 million requests, House had appropriated \$3 million)
- **Biodiesel Fuel Education** (Sec 9004) – \$1 million (same as previous requests and level set by Farm Bill)
- **Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency** (Sec 9006) – \$23 million (fully funded thanks to House leadership, Administration had requested \$10.77 million and Senate \$20 million, new language requires all funds go to awards and not USDA program administration)
- **Biomass Research & Development** (Sec 9008) – \$14 million (same as previous requests)
- **CCC Bioenergy Program** (Sec 9010) – \$100 million (same as previous requests, but still less than \$150 million authorized by Farm Bill)

Federal Spending Bill Fuels Northwest Research Efforts

Research into diverse uses for regional oilseed crops received a boost under the recent omnibus appropriations bill. University of Idaho will receive \$1.2 million to continue canola research activities, and Oregon State University's meadowfoam project will have \$262,000 to support their efforts to increase the supply of renewable industrial oils.

One of the region's most extensive programs, Montana State University's [Institute for Biobased Products & Food Science](#) was allocated \$567,000, much of it to support ongoing biofuels research into:

- **Biodiesel:** Eight crops at six locations are being evaluated to determine the most cost-effective feedstock for biodiesel production. Research into *Camelina*, an under-exploited oilseed crop native to Europe, has revealed a production cost half that of canola-based biodiesel.
- **Ethanol:** Ongoing research into ethanol from annual grasses is expected to half production costs of ethanol made from grain. Researchers are also looking into manufacture of long chain alcohols as a byproduct of biodiesel production. The longer chain alcohols should overcome the relatively poor energy values of methanol and ethanol.
- **Biolubricants:** A wide variety of biobased lubricants are being developed from canola and safflower, including hydraulic, motor, two-cycle and bar-chain oils. Canola-based motor oils have shown durability comparable to conventional oils, a modest increase in horsepower, improved fuel economy, and reduced emissions.

Ethanol On the Move in Idaho

Even though Simplot has now [closed](#) the last of their ethanol plants due to changes in the potato processing industry, the future of ethanol production in the Gem State is looking up. In September, the Idaho Farm Bureau co-sponsored a tour of Minnesota ethanol plants and wind farms for five state legislators and several county commissioners. They heard local elected officials and farmers speak at length about the benefits of clean energy development, and the importance of that state's 10% ethanol fuel standard. A subsequent [seminar](#) in Twin Falls brought together US Rep. Mike Simpson, agricultural groups, and other business and civic leaders. Simpson noted ethanol production could provide local dairies with high protein feed, with manure then loaded into anaerobic digesters to produce methane to power the ethanol plant.

Following up on their extensive legwork, the Farm Bureau is now advocating for Idaho to become the third state in the nation with an [ethanol requirement](#), a 10% fuel standard by 2010. A [legislative panel](#) studying public transportation and air quality issues supported the Farm Bureau's plan, but the *Idaho Statesman* voiced concerns about proponents' claims. Jim Glancey of Wyoming Ethanol, who plans to reopen a small former Simplot plant in Burley next year to make ethanol from dairy whey, offered this [response](#) to their concerns.

Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne has signaled his support by [filling up](#) his flex-fuel SUV at the state's first E85 pump in Boise. The pump is one of several "Treasure the Valley's Air" programs promoted by public and private interests, including the Idaho Farm Bureau and Idaho Grain Producers Association, to improve air quality in the Treasure Valley region. At one time, 17% of all gas sold in Idaho was ethanol. The level is now down to less than 5%.

[New Montana Governor Signals Support for Clean Energy](#)

Within days of his November election, Gov.-elect Brian Schweitzer declared support for clean energy development. While [announcing](#) his transition team, Schweitzer took time to point out he'll be pushing a bill to encourage ethanol production as a central part of his economic development plans. "And you can count on more ideas on value-added agriculture," he told reporters. Key [sponsorship](#) for a 10% ethanol requirement is expected from State Sen. Jerry Black, who drafted a similar bill in 2003.

Schweitzer's interest in clean energy can also be seen in his agency appointments. Montana agricultural groups are praising the [selection](#) of Nancy Peterson as the next state Department of Agriculture director. According to Chris Christiaens of the Montana Farmers Union, "My understanding is Nancy is interested in pursuing ... wind energy, biodiesel and ethanol." Richard Owen of the Montana Grain Growers Association adds, "She has lots of experience in understanding grain issues, farm programs ... we think Nancy's a solid choice." Schweitzer's appointment of Richard Opper to head the Department of Environmental Quality has also excited clean energy advocates. Opper launched his career in Billings in the 1980s as an environmental consultant for several projects, including an effort to turn an idled sugar beet refinery in Hardin into an ethanol plant.

[Can Oregon Agriculture "Fuel" Alternative Energy Movement?](#)

Bruce Pokarney, Communications Director for Oregon's Department of Agriculture, explores answers provided by a panel of biofuel and agriculture experts at a recent Board of Agriculture meeting. Bottom line – a processing infrastructure is needed before growers will commit to growing crops, but growing interest and legislative proposals are expected during the 2005 session. "We have a profound, unique opportunity to get things going," said State Rep. Jeff Kropf. "People from agriculture and people outside of agriculture, who often have issues of disagreement with each other, can come together on this."

Indeed, a diverse group of business and agriculture leaders, agency staff, utility representatives and clean energy advocates have been exploring economic development opportunities through the Renewable Energy Cluster Analysis Project. Coordinated by the Oregon Business Association, Oregon Environmental Council, and Oregon Economic & Community Development Department, participants have drafted an extensive set of action steps to further clean energy projects.

To be seen is how well the final Cluster Analysis report, due in mid-January, lines up with the state's [Renewable Energy Plan](#). The final draft of the Plan, currently sitting in the Governor's office, proposes that all diesel sold in Oregon contain at least 2% biodiesel by 2006. Support for any legislative initiatives may come from the Oregon Farm Bureau, which adopted a policy supporting renewable energy standards at their recent convention.

[OSU Biodiesel Initiative Receives EPA Grant](#)

A student-led team from OSU was one of four in the nation recently awarded a biodiesel-related P3 grant by the EPA. The \$10,000 award will help demonstrate the engineering and economic feasibility of biodiesel, and identify technical and social factors critical to full-scale implementation of sustainable biodiesel production and use in the Willamette Valley. The team will eventually present their findings to a National Academies panel in Washington DC in hopes of securing additional development funds.

[Sustainable Systems Acquired by Chinese Firm](#)

The YaSheng Group has announced plans to acquire 80% of Missoula-based biofuels developer Sustainable Systems LLC. As a subsidiary, Sustainable will continue to research, develop and commercialize bio-based fuels, lubricants, specialty chemicals and other bio-based products. The company anticipates developing and building a scalable bio-refinery in Washington State in the near future. A diversified industrial conglomerate incorporated in Redwood City CA, YaSheng Group has received numerous national "Green Awards" in China.

[Capital Press: Time is Now for Biofuels](#)

In a November 19 editorial, *Capital Press* publisher Elaine Shein and managing editor Carl Sampson pointed out how states like Minnesota have benefited by taking the lead in encouraging ethanol production, noted the importance of reducing foreign fuel consumption and air pollution, and explored the value of co-products. "By working together, farmers, government officials, entrepreneurs – and even environmentalists – can make biofuel plants a reality. Done correctly and prudently, the results will benefit our farmers, our ranchers, our environment and our nation."

[Company Looks to Oregon Straw for Ethanol](#)

Straw production in the Willamette Valley has attracted the interest of Montana Microbial Products, which is planning a pilot plant for converting grass straw to ethanol. The firm has been working with the Oregon Department of Energy on a lower temperature process that can use plastic tanks instead of more expensive stainless steel vats. Even if Oregon maintains existing export levels it is estimated the state has close to 500,000 tons of excess straw each year, enough to support a 20 mgy ethanol plant.

[Portland Retains Winter Oxygenation Requirement](#)

Gasoline retailers in four Portland-area counties will still need to provide a 10% ethanol mix during three months each winter. The Oregon Environmental Quality Commission voted unanimously on December 10 to keep the rule in effect until October 2007. Commissioners characterized their decision as a compromise intended to satisfy concerns about air quality, foster the use of alternative fuels, and support the state's budding ethanol industry. More than 200 individuals, farm groups, and state lawmakers lobbied the Commission to keep the winter fuel rule.

[Biotech Boost for Ethanol Production](#) (PDF 69KB)

Broin Companies, in cooperation with biotech leader Novozymes, has announced a new patent-pending ethanol production process that reportedly eliminates a costly energy-consuming step while increasing the conversion efficiency. “Broin Project X” releases additional starch content and increases protein content and quality of byproducts, potentially increasing plant throughput while significantly decreasing plant emissions. The firm has already implemented the process in three of its 19 plants, and will license the BPX process to the industry.

[Biofuels Groups Praise New Ag Secretary Nominee](#)

President Bush’s nomination of Nebraska Gov. Mike Johanns for Agriculture Secretary brought quick praise from national biofuels and commodity groups. Johanns was an early supporter of renewable fuels, including a state tax incentive for farmer-produced ethanol programs and a ban on MTBE that helped spur demand for corn-based ethanol.

“Governor Johanns clearly understands the vital role expanding ethanol production plays in improving the rural economy and increasing farm income, reducing our dependence on foreign oil, and improving our air quality by reducing vehicle emissions.” – Renewable Fuels Association

“During his tenure as Nebraska governor, Johanns established incentives for business growth and job creation in rural areas of Nebraska, placing an emphasis on value-added agriculture, especially ethanol.” – National Corn Growers Association

“Governor Johanns ... has been a tireless proponent of biofuels in Nebraska. ... With enactment of a new tax incentive, we have a golden opportunity to build a vibrant biodiesel industry in the U.S.” – American Soybean Association

“During his tenure as Nebraska’s governor, Mr. Johanns consistently demonstrated his commitment to promoting rural economic development by providing incentives for business growth and job creation in rural and urban areas of Nebraska, with an emphasis on value-added agriculture.” – American Farm Bureau Federation

[Production Tax Credit Implementation Moves Forward](#)

The National Biodiesel Board, American Soybean Association and Renewable Fuels Association have been meeting with the IRS’ Excise Tax Enforcement team to discuss implementation of the recently adopted Volumetric Ethanol Excise Tax Credit. As the first federal tax incentive to include biodiesel, working with the IRS to assure effective regulation and implementation is considered critical. To date, the IRS’ strongest interest has been enforcement, including registration and reporting necessary to track biodiesel from producers to brokers or other middlemen and on to blenders.

[Council of State Governments Releases Biofuels Study](#) (PDF 243KB)

According to a new *TrendsAlert* from CSG, rapid growth in the ethanol and biodiesel industries can help the US meet increasing fuel demands, stimulate state economies, and bolster domestic energy security. The report discusses major issues surrounding biofuels development, explores a wide range of policy options available to state policy-makers, and highlights current state measures. There are now 43 states using production and/or application-based incentives to promote the production, distribution and adoption of biofuels.

[Biofuels Can Reduce Foreign Oil Dependence](#) (PDF 746KB)

A new report, "Growing Energy: How Biofuels Can Help End America's Oil Dependence," has been published by a diverse group of agricultural, engineering and environmental experts exploring the security, economic and environmental benefits of biofuels. Two years in the making, their analysis is the first to focus on the impacts of bioenergy technologies when they are commercially mature and operating on a large scale. One key finding – an aggressive plan to develop cellulosic biofuels between now and 2015 could, by 2050, produce more than three times the oil currently imported from the Persian Gulf.

Biopower

[Idaho's First Digester Begins Operation](#)

Intrepid Technology & Resources has announced completion of the first stage of their Whitesides Biogas plant. Two anaerobic digester tanks are being loaded, and are expected to eventually produce 32,000 cubic feet per day of 80% methane biogas.

[Washington's First Commercial Digester On-Line](#)

The state's first commercial anaerobic digester, located at Vander Haak Dairy near Lynden, will use manure from up to 1,500 cows at three dairies. Some 70% of the \$1.2 million project cost will be covered by the dairy, with the balance coming from grants and other resources. Payback is expected within five to seven years. Puget Sound Energy will purchase the digester's electric output for the utility's Green Power program.

[Tulalip Recovery Efforts Fueled by Dairy Farms](#)

Tulalip Tribes, Sno/Sky Agricultural Alliance, Northwest Chinook Recovery, and the Washington State Dairy Federation are developing a biogas facility in Snohomish County to benefit both salmon stocks and local dairy farmers, many of whom are faced with selling out to housing developers. Manure from more than 2,000 cows and 30,000 pounds of food waste will be processed daily. With a feasibility study recently completed, construction of the \$2.5 million facility is planned for next year.

[Feds Earmark \\$1.5 million for Montana "Fuels for Schools" Program](#)

Thanks to the new federal budget, the US Forest Service and Montana DEQ will soon be requesting development proposals from a dozen communities that have already completed feasibility studies. The program's funding, roughly equal to what they received last year, will also cover administration costs and new feasibility studies for schools looking to install biomass boilers. The Darby and Victor school districts have already [installed](#) boilers, and Phillipsburg's is under construction. Feasibility studies have been completed for schools in Troy, Libby, Bonner and Seeley Lake, and a study underway at University of Montana Western in Dillon is just wrapping up.

[Idaho School Bond to Fund First Biomass Boiler](#)

The first “Fuels for Schools” program in Idaho is underway thanks to passage of a school bond in the community of Council. Construction will probably start in May. The system should be operating by October. The school district expects to attract both regional and national attention due to their leadership in biomass energy.

[Great Lakes Biogas Casebook Updated](#) (PDF 2.3MB)

This update of the original 2002 casebook contains brief profiles of on-farm biogas systems with information gathered last spring from owners, operators, designers, servicing utilities and published reports. These projects and others across the country are routinely tracked by the Wisconsin Biogas Development Group, currently hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Contact [Roger Kasper](#) to be added to their distribution list.

[Study Profiles Digester Technologies and Opportunities](#) (PDF 61KB)

At the 10th World Congress on Anaerobic Digestion held in Montreal in September, Peter Wright with Cornell University’s Biological and Environmental Engineering Department provided a paper, “Overview of US Experiences with Farm Scale Biogas Plants.” Although the emphasis is on dairy farm systems in the Northeast, he provides an excellent summary of five digester technologies, economic results, treatment parameters, energy production, and barriers and opportunities for adoption.

[New Gasification Process Runs Diesel Engine](#)

The University of North Dakota’s Energy & Environmental Research Center has successfully generated electricity from biomass sources such as forest residues, wood chips, sawdust, and agricultural by-products using a cost-effective new gasification technology. EERC and its commercial partners are seeking partnerships with industries interested in biomass management and demonstrating the technology at forest product sites around the country. “This provides many exciting opportunities for enhancing national energy independence and could significantly reduce the use of landfills,” said EERC Director Gerald Groenewold.

[Waste-to-Energy Research and Technology Council](#)

This organization of industry, government and university researchers seeks to advance the economic and environmental performance of waste-to-energy technologies. Their website offers answers to frequently asked questions, links to industry contacts, and research publications. Included are papers from the 12th national WTE conference exploring “Is WTE a Renewable Energy Source?” and “Combining Anaerobic Digestion and Waste-To-Energy.”

[Puget Sound Energy Adds 150 MW to Wind Portfolio](#)

PSE has announced plans to acquire the proposed Hopkins Ridge Wind Project from Blue Sky Wind LLC. Still in permitting, the wind farm is situated on 11,000 acres 15 miles northeast of Dayton in Columbia County. As proposed, some eighty 1.8 MW turbines would be delivering power via BPA's North Lewiston-Walla Walla line sometime between late 2005 and mid-2006. The acquisition, PSE's second wind project, follows their purchase of the proposed 230 MW Wild Horse Wind Project in Kittitas County. Interest in Hopkins Ridge stems from the utility's request for proposals issued last February. PSE reviewed more than 40 proposals from 10 wind developers in the region that together represented roughly 1,800 MW of renewable energy.

[Klondike Wind Farm Study, Expansion Announced](#)

A new [study](#) (PDF 135KB) by Renewable Northwest Project, "Windfall from the Wind Farm: Sherman County, Oregon," tallies the economic benefits enjoyed by local and regional businesses during planning and construction, and the positive effect of increased property tax revenues on county services. The county expects to collect some \$250,000 in property taxes annually during the 24 MW farm's 20-30 year lifetime. Economic development benefits are poised to grow substantially thanks to PPM Energy's recent [announcement](#) that it will expand the project by 75 MW. Portland General Electric has [agreed](#) to purchase the power when it begins flowing by December 2005. The purchase agreement marks a major step toward the renewable power supply goals outlined in the company's 2002 Integrated Resource Plan.

[Permitting Decision Nears for Desert Claim Wind Project](#)

This proposed 180 MW, 120-turbine wind farm on 5,200 acres north of Ellensburg could be the first approved in the area, but it still faces stiff local resistance. Developer enXco chose to seek Kittitas County approval and not go through the Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, as Zilkha Renewable Energy has for its two large proposed Kittitas County wind farms. In late October, the Kittitas County Planning Commission unanimously recommended disapproval of Desert Claim, finding it locally detrimental in scale, noise and property valuation, incompatible with nearby land uses and not essential for electricity needs. On December 8, the Kittitas County Board of Commissioners [asked EnXco](#) to address shortfalls in its draft development agreement. The commissioners will meet again December 27 to review the revised application.

[Umatillas to Join in Wind Energy Project](#)

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla will join with Columbia Energy Partners to build a 104 MW wind farm near Arlington. The tribes will invest in the project and participate in a development loan with the Oregon Department of Energy in exchange for partial ownership. The partners have worked with the National Renewable Energy Lab the last two years to analyze wind data at the site. It showed average wind speeds of 14-15 mph over a 15-month period. "The tribes have long been advocates for diversifying the Northwest's energy portfolio and developing cost effective renewables such as wind," said tribal Executive Director Don Sampson.

Idaho PUC Approves State's Largest Wind Plant

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has given the go-ahead to a 20-year power purchase agreement between Idaho Power and developers of the 10.5 MW Fossil Gulch Wind Park 30 miles northwest of Twin Falls. Idaho Power's interest in wind power has been on the increase since April, when the commission approved the company's first wind power agreement to purchase 9 MW from United Materials of Great Falls. Other Idaho projects in the works include PowerWorks' proposed 171 MW farm near Mountain Home, and Windland's proposed 200 MW project near Albion. Both developers plan to complete their projects in 2006.

Idaho Power Seeks More Wind Power

A draft request for proposals for up to 200 MW of wind-powered generation by the end of 2007 has been released for comment. Half of the power must be available no later than year-end 2006, and individual respondents need to offer a minimum of 30 MW. If details in the draft hold up, proposals will be due March 10. Idaho Power estimates wind will make up about 5% of their power generation capacity (some 350 MW) by 2013. [Email](#) your formal comments on the draft RFP by January 3.

Montana Farm Bureau Supports Wind Development

Voting delegates from across the state came together at the Farm Bureau's convention in November to adopt policies that included support for wind power development. "Because of the increase in energy prices, it's essential to look at how we can best and most wisely use Montana's resources to provide energy to everyone in the state," said MFBF President Dave McClure.

Portland Heads to Hills for Power

The Portland City Council is considering a proposal to become the first large city in the world to use wind power to meet 100% of its facility energy needs. The initiative would help the city meet goals to reduce global warming, provide economic benefits for rural Eastern Oregon, and realize stable utility prices over the course of a 15- to 20-year investment. The city has issued a request for information as it analyzes ownership options. Proponents are hopeful a formal request for proposals can be out by April, with wind power delivered by early 2007.

Fort Lewis Buys Wind Energy

BPA will supply the US Army with green power to meet about 5% of the electricity needs at Fort Lewis. Under an agreement with Tacoma Power, the Fort will buy about 12 million kWh of wind energy certificates from BPA sourced from wind farms located in eastern Washington and Oregon. Fort Lewis serves more than 25,000 soldiers and civilian workers and uses about the same amount of electricity as a city the size of Olympia.

Solar

[Local Oregon High School Launches New Solar Power System](#)

On November 18, Summit High School in Bend held a “Flip the Switch” ceremony to celebrate the launch of the school’s new 5,344-watt, 32-panel solar power system. Funded through a grant from the Energy Trust of Oregon, the new solar project is expected to provide 7,315 kilowatt-hours of annual electricity savings and revenue of 10¢/kWh through Green Tag sales.

Geothermal

[Experts See Potential for Idaho Geothermal Resources](#)

Experts believe power from subterranean hot water deposits around the state could play a major role in meeting future electricity demands. “It will be interesting to see what happens in Idaho in the next few years,” said Karl Gawell, executive director of the Geothermal Energy Association. Idaho Power has included 100 MW of geothermal in its long-range energy plan, in part due to constraints on hydropower resources that have been hit hard by five straight years of drought.

One proposed source of geothermal power, US Geothermal’s Raft River project, recently completed a well [test program](#) (PDF 24KB) that found four of the existing production wells have an initial capacity of 13.8 MW. The study confirmed the project’s commercial viability and will be used in the final design of a 10 MW net power plant, the first phase of a staged expansion of the Raft River geothermal field. A long-term power purchase agreement with Idaho Power is pending approval before the Idaho Public Utilities Commission. It is believed the extended area could host an energy generation potential in excess of 200 MW.

Idatherm is also hoping to respond to Idaho Power’s needs. The firm is actively looking for financing for six or more wells in southern Bonneville and northern Bingham counties to produce 100 MW. The resource has gone undeveloped since a company drilling for oil in the area 30 years ago discovered the geothermal deposit.

[Production Tax Credit Benefits Delayed for Geothermal](#)

Though geothermal power now qualifies for the recently expanded federal production tax credit, the financial boost won’t directly benefit any Northwest geothermal prospects as none are planning to be operational before the year-end 2005 eligibility deadline. Industry leaders remain optimistic, however, that the PTC will eventually be extended. “The biggest difficulty was just getting on the list,” commented Doug Glaspey of US Geothermal.

[OR Dept of Ag Director Cites Clean Energy Benefits](#)

Speaking at a Strategic Economic Development Corporation luncheon in Salem on November 18, Oregon Department of Agriculture Director Katy Coby noted the ways farmers could realize extra income through clean energy development. Coby cited capturing methane from cow manure to fire electric power plants, selling electricity generated by wind-powered turbines, and biodiesel processing facilities.

[Idaho PUC Settles Small-Power Producer Issues](#)

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has issued an order defining the parameters of contracts between Idaho Power and developers of small-power wind and geothermal projects. Operators in the state had filed complaints earlier this year alleging Idaho Power is requiring contract terms contrary to federal PURPA provisions. The order addresses compensation and penalties when power levels vary from projected output, criteria for determining whether a project qualifies under the 10 MW PURPA threshold, and consequences of deregulation.

[Climate Friendly Farming Moves Into Energy Recovery](#)

WSU's Climate Friendly Farming Research and Demonstration Project is profiled in this article from the November edition of *BioCycle*. The five-year effort is investigating how agricultural systems contribute to, and can help mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, sequestering carbon, and reducing use of fossil fuels.

[Use Local Green Tags to Spur Bioenergy Projects](#)

Chad Kruger, director of outreach for WSU's Climate Friendly Farming Project, explores how clean energy attributes could be marketed to promote rural bioenergy efforts in the December edition of *Sustainable Industries Journal*. "A local green tag for bioenergy could be a new mechanism that enables farmers to turn the environmental liabilities of modern farming into assets for their community," argues Kruger. "Small energy producers and communities don't usually have access to the same types of capital that large utilities do. They could benefit from the use of local green tags as a capital pool for the development of distributed, renewable energy generation."

[Northwest Power and Conservation Plan: Fulfilling the Promise](#)

With [adoption](#) of the Fifth Northwest Power and Conservation Plan, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council has committed to meeting half of the expected growth in electricity demand in the BPA service territory over the next 20 years through energy efficiency, and most of the rest with new wind power. Clean energy advocates are now asking, "How do we turn the Plan's potential into reality?" A group of energy leaders offered their [thoughts](#) at the Northwest Energy Coalition's recent fall conference in Portland.

[Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture](#) (PDF 1.5MB)

An article in WSU's alumni magazine, *Connections*, explores how climate change may result in new pest problems, the need for crops adapted to different growing seasons, and ways on-farm energy uses contribute to climate-changing emissions.

[Colorado Voters Approve Renewable Energy on Ballot](#)

Colorado voters are the first in the nation to pass a renewable energy standard on a statewide ballot. Colorado now joins 17 states with minimum clean energy standards. Three other states (New York, Maryland and Rhode Island) adopted renewable energy standards this year, and still more (including Arizona, Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin) are exploring similar renewable energy measures. Amendment 37 requires Colorado's top electric utility companies to provide an increasing percentage of retail electricity sales from renewable sources; starting at 3% in 2007, 6% by 2011 and increasing to 10% by 2015.

[Advocates Call for Strategy to Commercialize Existing Technology](#) (PDF 252KB)

Renewable energy advocates are launching a major effort to steer federal and state policies toward far greater utilization of renewable technologies, arguing that decades of research and development have generated mature technologies poised for wider adoption. The American Council on Renewable Energy recently hosted a conference designed to foster policy proposals for both renewable electricity and biofuels. Examples of potential policies include direct federal funding for state renewable energy programs, and elimination of sunset clauses in renewable energy tax incentives.

[Bioenergy Report Highlights Energy from Agriculture](#)

On November 8, the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology released "Bioenergy: Pointing to the Future," a collection of five stand-alone pieces highlighting the current science, processes, potentials and future research needs for energy production through agriculture. According to Don Erbach, co-chair of the task force which prepared the report, "The development and expansion of a biofuel industry founded on a strong agricultural sector can play a role in enhancing energy security, cleaning our environment, and promoting farm and rural economic growth."

[Looking Towards a Carbon-Constrained World](#)

Speakers at the Oregon Environmental Council's most recent "Forum for Business and Environment" addressed the potential financial benefits available to farmers through production of carbon-restricting biomass crops and leasing of land for renewable energy resources like wind. "Farmers could be one of the main sources of carbon offsets or carbon credits," noted Joel Swisher of the Rocky Mountain Institute. Producing biomass energy through a number of emerging technologies could also provide an economic return. "You would get a payment for your fuel, which would have as part of its other revenue stream the value of the carbon credits as well, because you are replacing fossil fuels," Swisher said.

Events

[Harvesting Clean Energy V, Jan 20-21, Great Falls](#)

Don't miss the region's premiere event bringing agriculture and energy together to share resources and ideas on how to profit from clean energy sources. Now in its fifth year, the conference will feature experts and farmers with direct experience in successful clean energy projects. Speakers will walk through renewable energy feasibility and economic assessments, technical and financial resources, and finding markets.

[Biofuels Lobby Day & Bioenergy Forum, Mar 2, Salem](#)

A busy day for Oregon renewable energy advocates begins with a forum on "Bioenergy: A Boost for Oregon's Economy." Speakers will detail action steps stemming from a recent biofuels industry cluster analysis, discuss the state's potential for biodiesel production, and explore Minnesota's successful biofuels industry. Afterwards, Biofuels Lobby Day will provide an opportunity for legislators and citizens to learn more about biofuels and discuss legislative initiatives. Biofuel-powered vehicles and equipment will be on display, and biofuel co-ops, producers, distributors and advocates will have exhibits.

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