The Nebraska Forest Service, through an array of strategic initiatives and partnerships, orients its programs to foster tree- and forest-based economic development across the state.

**WOOD BIOENERGY:**
Facilitating greater use of wood for heating and cooling

- Funded wood bioenergy feasibility studies for Chadron Hospital, Chadron Public Schools, Crow Butte Resources, Inc. (a uranium processing plant), Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture and Peru State College.
- In 2005 Chadron State College began operating a 600-ton wood-fired chiller, funded in part by the NFS. CSC currently uses approximately 9,000 tons of chips/year to both heat and cool more than 1 million square feet of building space, saving $200,000/year in energy costs.
- Since 2001, 5,663 acres in the Pine Ridge and Niobrara Valley have been treated or are under contract for fuels treatment. Supported by $2.7 million in federal and state funds, as well as landowner contributions, these projects reduce fuel loads and the risk of catastrophic fire and generate nearly 25,000 tons of waste wood/year for bioenergy applications.

**TIMBER SALES:**
Expanding the utilization of Nebraska’s forest resources

- Generated $85,992 in direct payments to landowners through NFS-facilitated timber sales on private and state land, with nearly $300,000 in economic impacts to local rural economies.
- Since 2001, NFS has facilitated more than $3 million in timber sales statewide, with $9 million in economic impacts, generating 60 skilled jobs in the logging, trucking and processing industries. More than 33.5 million board feet of sawtimber has been harvested, enough to build almost 1,800 homes.

**FORESTRY COST-SHARE FUNDS:**
Improving the value and condition of Nebraska’s forests

- Distributed $725,402 in federal and state cost-share dollars in 2007 to rural communities to foster forestland improvement, install community tree plantings and provide rural fire districts with firefighting and safety equipment.
- This support was leveraged by $7.1 million in local resources.
SPECIALTY WOODY CROP ENTREPRENEURSHIP:
Catalyzing value-added alternative crops

- Provided funds and technical assistance to Heartland Nuts N’ More to purchase key equipment, assess markets and develop products. Heartland Nuts N’ More is a new tree nut processing and marketing cooperative that increases rural income and stimulates tree planting.
- Utilized a $150,000 grant to accelerate commercialization of woody floral and hybrid hazelnut industries in Nebraska through 2008.
- Worked with Nebraska Woody Florals, a for-profit cooperative of woody floral growers, to assess regional markets, increase production capacity and improve processing capabilities.
- Develop national consortium to accelerate commercialization of hybrid hazelnut for both foods and biodiesel. *Top yielders can produce twice as much oil suitable for biodiesel per acre as soybeans.*
- Established major research collaboration with Rutgers University to evaluate hazelnut disease resistance.

FORESTRY EDUCATION & OUTREACH:
Stimulating rural development through education

- Trained and assisted nearly 15,000 people, resulting in improved tree care practices and enhanced resource protection, quality and value statewide.
- Trained and certified 111 Nebraska Arborist Association-certified arborists and 55 International Society of Arboriculture-certified arborists to date.
- Fostered business-to-business contacts between producers, processors and buyers of wood and specialty forest products.