

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nebraska Forest Service Offers Cost-Share Assistance for Wood Energy Conversion

LINCOLN, Neb. – Two cost-share assistance grants offered by the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) could result in significant utility savings for private, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. Part of the new TREES Heat Nebraska program, these grants are designed to help establish woody biomass utilization markets, specifically for heating and cooling and for generating electricity. Funding originated from the Wildfire Control Act of 2013, which calls for the development of markets for woody biomass generated from forest thinnings.

Organizations that could benefit include municipalities, universities, colleges, schools, hospitals, correctional facilities, livestock and agricultural facilities and horticulture greenhouses.

“The grants will help cover the upfront costs of installing wood-fueled energy systems,” said Adam Smith, NFS forest products utilization team leader. “Historically there has been a lack of capital assistance for the development and installation of these energy systems, often derailing potential projects. Utilizing these grants will allow organizations to more quickly benefit from fuel savings—potentially realizing a 50 percent energy savings per month,” Smith said.

The grants provide cost-share funding for contractual services for the final design, construction and installation of wood-fueled energy systems that generate thermal or electrical energy, including the purchase of a boiler system and equipment.

“Energy produced from wood boilers currently heats two Nebraska colleges, the Arbor Day’s Lied Lodge and Conference Center, many small manufacturing facilities, and is used to dry and pelletize alfalfa for animal feed.” Smith said. “These facilities experience significant utility savings over traditional fossil fuel use.”

Two types of grant funding are available:

- 1) cost-share assistance to public, private, for-profit and not-for-profit agencies or organizations located in Nebraska to purchase and install woody energy systems, including the construction of new systems and the renovation or expansion of existing energy systems;
- 2) cost-share assistance for contractual services for technical engineering feasibility studies that investigate the potential for wood energy use.

NFS encourages facilities to engage with NFS early in the project planning process. Information is available at nfs.unl.edu/trees-heat-nebraska. Applications must be received at NFS by Oct. 31, 2014.

The Nebraska Forest Service, an affiliate of the University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR), works to enrich lives by protecting, restoring and utilizing Nebraska’s tree and forest resources. Information about the Nebraska Forest Service is available: nfs.unl.edu

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