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**University of Minnesota, Morris receives ACORE Campus Excellence Award
for Use of Renewable Energy**

Campus to get 80% of heating and cooling from new biomass plant

WASHINGTON , D.C. – October 16, 2008 The first American Council On Renewable Energy (ACORE) Campus Excellence Award for “Outstanding Use of Renewable Energy” was presented to the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) at a dedication ceremony October 3 to launch the school’s new biomass gasification facility, which will supply 80% of the school’s heating and cooling needs. Cheri Faso Olf, ACORE’s Director of Education and Program Manager of the Higher Education Committee on Renewable Energy (HEC), presented the award to UMM’s Vice Chancellor, Lowell Rasmussen, and other campus leaders before a host of state and local dignitaries and community leaders.

During [the award speech](#), ACORE’s Olf congratulated UMM on the work that led up to the launch of its biomass facility, saying that it “represents the highest level of commitment that our institutions of higher education can make to renewable energy.” She added that, “By engaging in renewable energy research, the academic community--and an amazing generation of students--are making a significant and positive impact.”

The UMM biomass gasification facility will provide energy to the campus which is both clean and renewable, replacing much of the power formerly supplied by fossil fuels. The biomass gasification reactor will burn 9,000 tonnes of biomass annually, converting agricultural products and residue, such as corn stover and prairie grasses, into syngas for energy production. Beyond energy production, the facility will also pump hundreds of thousands of dollars into the local economy through the purchase of these fuel sources, while also creating economic and "green collar" employment opportunities for the west central region of Minnesota.

In addition to providing economic opportunities for the rural community, the biomass plant will also help UMM move closer to its goal of energy self-sufficiency and carbon neutrality, or even “carbon negativity,” according to Rasmussen, by 2010. Olf told attendees that ACORE’s goal is to promote comparable efforts by all US colleges and universities, challenging each other in both teaching about and

transitioning to renewable energy sources. "When that kind of competition happens, we all win," she said.

UMM has been an ACORE member since 2006 and Vice Chancellor Rasmussen is a Founding Steering Committee member of ACORE's Higher Education Committee on Renewable Energy. During the dedication, Rasmussen credited ACORE as "an early champion for the use of renewable energy" and said that "the University of Minnesota-Morris is proud to be associated with such a visionary organization."

The new biomass facility was cited by UMN Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson as an exemplary model of not only a green renewable energy source, but also as a community-based energy system. Referencing the uniqueness of the University's approach to implementing renewable energy and the shared commitment of the university's student body, Johnson said, "No other school is putting things together quite the way we are. We have a lot to be proud of."

A speech by Patrick Chester, President of the Morris Campus Student Association, noted that this one-of-a-kind biomass plant offers opportunities for students to experience first-hand how renewable energy can be put to use in society. "The biomass plant is perfect for our University," said Chester. "It is a project that was pushed for by students and shows our common desire to preserve our environment, while offering research opportunities to students that they will not find anywhere else."

Funding and support to build the facility came from a variety of government and non-government sources. The project also received one of only 12 energy grants from the United States Department of Agriculture and Energy – in the amount of \$1.89 million – to conduct additional research at the plant. The grant enables UMM and the West Central Research and Outreach Center to partner with the USDA Agricultural Research Service to conduct further research on carbon sequestration.

Other speakers at the dedication included Mayor Sheldon Giese, State Representatives Torrey Westrom and Al Juhnke, and Regent John Frobenius. Representatives from the offices of Senators Norm Coleman and Amy Klobuchar and Representative Collin Peterson also delivered messages on their behalf.

[Watch a video about the new plant here](#) (video produced by the University of Minnesota)

About ACORE

ACORE, a 501(c)(3) membership nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., is dedicated to bringing renewable energy into the mainstream of the US economy and lifestyle through information and communications programs. ACORE provides a common platform for the wide range of interests in the renewable energy community including renewable energy industries, associations, utilities, end users, professional service firms, financial institutions and government agencies. ACORE serves as a forum through which these parties work together on common interests. Membership information is available at:

www.acore.org.

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