

Project: Montana Green: A Renewable Resources Energy Center

Brief Description: Montana State University Billings requests an appropriation of \$300,000 to develop the first renewable resource energy center in Montana utilizing state-of-the-art technologies to support environmentally friendly and self-sustaining communities in the state.

Executive Summary: Using applications from state-of-the-art technologies as well as expertise gathered from wind power, biodiesel and renewable resources, MSU Billings will provide a hub of knowledge that civic leaders, policymakers, business, industry and others can use to better understand the potential of renewable resource energy.

United States policymakers have generally reached consensus that it is time to move beyond fossil fuels – especially oil – as sources of energy. While the reasoning takes various points of view (reducing our dependence on unstable, oil-producing regions of the world; cutting greenhouse gases; avoiding continual price increases; energy security) most Americans agree that time is coming for replace billions of gallons gasoline with alternative fuels. President Bush has set a target of replacing 20 percent of the nation's annual gasoline consumption with renewable fuels by 2017. In Montana, Gov. Schweitzer is challenging citizens to find more efficient energy consumption.

Meanwhile, as prices of more traditional energy sources continue to fluctuate, the global market for clean energy sources such as biofuels, hydrogen fuel cells and wind energy rose to \$40 billion in 2005, according to a report by Clean Edge Inc.

The proposal will enhance Montana's economic development and competitiveness potential by using energy-related applied research, testing and data collection in the region to help businesses, industry and civic leaders make better informed decisions. A data repository and analysis team will help in energy development activities, environmental studies and community informational systems. It will also benefit Montana by coordinating data resources and information to support regional business and industry.

Congressional Action Needed: An appropriation of \$300,000 is requested.

Importance/Outcomes for Montana: As the business and industry hub of Montana and the northern plains, this connection between MSU Billings and business, industry and government partners creates a synergy that will help in job creation, lifetime employability and business recruitment. This project will also have a significant positive effect on advancing competitiveness of the state's workforce by providing undergraduate and graduate students with opportunities to develop skills and needed in key industries. Partnerships will be developed with energy-related businesses and entrepreneurs

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Montana Green: A Renewable Resources Energy Center at Montana State University Billings

Talking Points

- Funding of \$300,000 sought for Montana State University Billings to develop a renewable resource energy center in Montana utilizing state-of-the-art technologies to support environmentally friendly and self-sustaining communities in the state.
- Using applications from state-of-the-art technologies as well as expertise gathered from wind power, biodiesel and renewable resources, MSU Billings will provide a hub of knowledge that civic leaders, policymakers, business, industry and others can use to better understand the potential of renewable resource energy.
- This project expands services offered by the university, advances the intellectual capital and applied research capacity of Eastern Montana and leverages public/private partnerships to enhance economic development.
- Using applications from state-of-the-art technologies as well as expertise gathered from wind power, biodiesel and renewable resources, MSU Billings will provide a hub of knowledge that civic leaders, policymakers, business, industry and others can use to better understand the potential of renewable resource energy.
- This project will provide the perfect merger between economic development and technology in Eastern Montana. It enhances Montana's economic development and competitiveness potential by using energy-related applied research, testing and data collection in the region to help businesses, industry and civic leaders make better informed decisions.
- This project will also have significant impact on advancing competitiveness of the state's workforce, providing adequate technical security and information assurance, as well as using applied research for economic development.