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THE WILD CENTER PIONEERS RENEWABLE HEATING SYSTEM

Integrated high-efficiency wood-pellet boiler and solar-thermal heating system yield low-emissions with local, renewable-fuel

Tupper Lake, NY – The Wild Center unveiled an innovative heating system that will use a pioneering combination of renewable energy solutions. The Wild Center announced that it will install a highly efficient wood pellet boiler integrated with a solar tube hot water system that will supply much of the hot water required to heat the 54,000-square-foot facility in Tupper Lake. The new boiler system will represent the first highly efficient, commercial-sized, gasification wood-pellet boiler of its kind and size manufactured and installed in New York State. Additionally, the solar hot water tube collection system will be the first of its kind used in a commercial application in the Adirondack region.

In a letter of support that was read at today's event, Governor David A. Paterson said, "I wish to congratulate and thank The Wild Center for its leadership in demonstrating these innovative renewable heating systems. As we move away from a dependence on fossil fuels to renewable technologies, we must push to maximize the efficiency of these technologies both individually and in combination as this project does."

The project is supported by a \$300,000 contract award by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) in response to a competitive solicitation, "Energy and Environmental Performance of High-Efficiency Wood-fired Heating Equipment." Francis J. Murray, Jr., NYSERDA President and CEO, noted the priorities met by this demonstration installation: "Our goal has been to promote high-efficiency, renewable-fuel boilers that reduce harmful emissions, and burn a local fuel. We share Governor David Paterson's goal of lessening our dependence on foreign fossil fuels, reducing carbon emissions and potentially boosting the local economy by harvesting local wood waste as a fuel. We look forward to the installation results," he said.

A key component of the project is that Clarkson University will conduct a rigorous scientific evaluation of the energy-efficiency and emissions performance of the boiler as well as the integrated heating system and report its findings to NYSERDA. It is anticipated that this evaluation will provide objective scientific information to be used by decision makers developing renewable energy strategies. It will also serve as a model for others looking to evaluate ways to heat with renewable fuels in an efficient manner.

"Universities thrive, just like communities thrive, when they partner with others to become constant sources of new innovation, creativity and connections to the global world," says Clarkson President Tony

Collins. "Joining The Wild Center on this renewable energy demonstration was an easy decision – The Wild Center is truly an educational asset to the Adirondack region through all of its activities."

In New York State, renewable energy for heating is gaining increased interest as it addresses the goals of reducing fuel costs, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, stimulating local economic development and reducing dependence on foreign sources by replacing imported fossil fuels with locally available renewable fuels. In the Adirondacks, the most abundant and inexpensive renewable fuel is wood. However, traditional wood burning stoves, some common commercial wood boilers and, more recently, outdoor wood boilers suffer from low efficiency and high levels of pollution from incomplete combustion. The planned project offers a very clean-burning, highly efficient alternative use of wood fuel.

The Wild Center is the first museum in New York to receive a LEED certification, with a Silver distinction, from the United States Green Building Council (USGBC). The LEED standard is considered to be the international benchmark for green building. In selecting The Wild Center as the site for this project, backers pointed to the Center's position as a leader in sustainable operational practices.

"This innovative renewable heating and hot water system dovetails perfectly with The Wild Center's Silver LEED certification," said Chris Rdzaneck, the LEED accredited manager of museum facilities at The Wild Center. "From the Museum's inception, green building practices have been at the forefront of every decision that we make. A project this large in such a short period of time, from our opening in 2006, just demonstrates how quickly the renewable energy sector is changing. We are thrilled to have this chance to move this option from the drawing board to installation in time for this coming winter."

The successful installation and usage of the boiler system has the potential for a positive economic impact on the Adirondacks. By harvesting the "waste" in logging and sawmill operations to create wood pellets and then selling that back to local institutions the money that is currently sent abroad for the purchase of fossil fuels is kept in the Adirondacks where it can potentially lead to job creation.

The 1.7 million BTU boiler unit will be in The Wild Center's basement boiler room, next to the Museum's existing propane boiler. The pellets will be stored in an outdoor container next to the Administration wing of the Museum. The storage vessel will also support the solar tube array to preheat water for the system. Pellets will be augured through a series of pipes into the basement and directly into the boiler. Hot water from the solar array will be piped into the boiler through underground pipes.

The Wild Center's high rate of visitation means the new project will be explained to a large audience that will be able to see the heating technology up close. Visitors will be able to see the pellets on their journey from the storage vessel to the boiler. The interpretation of the system will be added to the Museum's 'New Path' Exhibit, which showcases elements of green design and how these features benefit the health of the human and natural world.

"The Wild Center presents options to our visitors. We use vehicles like the 'New Path' to present environmentally sustainable ideas to encourage people to think about the environment in a different way," said Stephanie Ratcliffe, executive director of The Wild Center. "By encouraging people to take away different ideas from The Wild Center we can help anyone make their own informed decisions that are right for them and hopefully the environment will benefit as well."

The system is in design now. The wood gasification boiler is being fabricated by Advanced Climate Technologies. Both systems are expected to be installed and functioning by the end of 2009.

The announcement today was made by Stephanie Ratcliffe and Chris Rdzanek and supported by Mark Watson from NYSERDA, David Dungate of Advanced Climate Technologies, Sloane Crawford from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and Chris Walsh of Empire State Development.

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