

## Good News from NEBTWG

June 29, 2012

Companies, governments, and communities around the Northeast are making progress on biomass heating and combined heat and power (CHP) programs and projects, and we've collected a sample to share in June's "Good News from NEBTWG!"

Below, you'll see how newsworthy events and stories are demonstrating the region's development of renewable biomass heating systems. If you have a story to contribute, please send the update to [info@nebioheat.org](mailto:info@nebioheat.org).

### VT: Biomass Included in State's Clean Energy Program

The state of Vermont has included biomass boilers in its clean energy program. The program will provide a rebate of up to \$5,000 for the installation of a commercial biomass system and a rebate of up to \$1000 for residential units and small commercial units. This type of incentive structure will help decrease the initial cost burden associated with biomass system installation and will help spur the usage of more biomass boilers and furnaces within the state. For more information, visit [Efficiency Vermont](#).

### MA: New Grant Programs Coming for Biomass Projects

Massachusetts is planning to initiate a heat based grant program this summer to encourage wood-to-heat projects. The current budget for the program is \$2,000,000 with allocations going to public buildings, a residential change out program, and the residential pellet market. These grant programs are being called "pilot programs," because program results will help shape future grant programs designed to encourage the use of wood to produce heat. An announcement of the program is expected within the month. The state is also planning grant programs to encourage the biomass combined Heat and Power market, but there is no timetable for this program. For more information, contact Charlie Cary at [ccary@biomasscombustion.com](mailto:ccary@biomasscombustion.com).

### ME: Maine-based Development Organization Promoting Biomass Thermal

Switching from oil to pellet heat is really taking hold in Aroostook County, Maine. Under the leadership of Aroostook Partnership for Progress, a recent Biomass Fair at the University of Maine, Presque Isle brought over 200 visitors to the booths of 20 vendors that were impressed not by the number of attendees but by their great enthusiasm. The organization has targeted heating fuel self-sufficiency as a major objective for "The County", as it is known in Maine. One financial lender reported that many more loan applications were submitted as result of the fair than usually occurs at much larger expos. The Partnership's Biomass Working Group is now following up with plans for next year's fair while seeking to establish a tracking system for all the oil-to-wood conversions taking place with 3 local high schools. Daigle Oil Company in Fort Kent, one of the most northern points in the U.S., recently purchased a pellet bulk delivery truck and joined the Maine Pellet Fuels Association. [More information >>](#)

### PA: PBEA Presents before the Joint Legislative Conservation Committee

The Pennsylvania Biomass Energy Association recently held a presentation for the state's Joint Legislative Conservation Committee on the important role that biomass can play in an "all of the above" energy plan. The event gave the PBEA an opportunity to educate lawmakers and discuss the challenges the industry is facing, including economic uncertainties in financing, government policies, feedstock logistics, and a need to educate end-users. [More information >>](#)

Another important upcoming event is the Pennsylvania Biomass Energy Association's Fall Conference in Harrisburg, PA on October 2-3. Registration will open on July 1. [More information >>](#)

**NH: New Hampshire Legislature Including Biomass Thermal into its RPS**

On June 19, Governor John Lynch signed into law Senate Bill 218, which among other changes adds thermal energy from renewable sources, including biomass, to the NH Renewable Portfolio Standard. The thermal provision will be worth up to \$63 million in incentives for renewable heating projects through 2025. Examples of biomass projects that will qualify include chip or pellet boilers for heating buildings, boilers producing process heat for industrial use, and the heat output from biomass-fueled combined heat and power projects. The NH Public Utilities Commission will now undertake rulemaking to implement the thermal provision. Projects that start after January 1, 2013 will qualify. To learn more contact the NH PUC at 603 271 2431 and request to be put on the email list for notice of rulemaking on SB 218. [More information >>](#)

**NH: Strides Made Toward a Systems Benefits Charge**

Charlie Niebling of New England Wood Pellet has prepared a white paper describing a thermal "system benefits charge" that would assess a modest fee on fossil heating fuels. Its proceeds would fund efficiency upgrades in oil and gas heating systems, fuel switching to renewable heating technologies (including biomass), and infrastructure investments to enable energy delivery businesses to transition to delivery and installation of renewable heating fuels and technologies. A system benefits charge already exists in many states on electricity and natural gas, with the proceeds typically used to fund efficiency and conservation measures for customers. A thermal counterpart would require state legislative action. Read the document in its entirety [here](#). Wide distribution of the white paper is encouraged, and input and feedback is welcome at [cniebling@pelletheat.com](mailto:cniebling@pelletheat.com).

**National: Residential Biomass Heater NSPS Delayed**

The EPA regulates most types of residential biomass heaters under the Clean Air Act, through New Source Performance Standards (NSPS). It was supposed to publish their recommendations in the Federal Register last year, and then by this time this year, but it continues to be delayed and has not yet appeared. Once published, the 90 day public comment period will be begin and then the final rule can become law a year after that. The two most contested and controversial areas are the 70% minimum efficiency recommendation for wood and pellet stoves and the test method and particulate levels allowed for boilers. The US must move faster towards the higher efficiency, more automated European style boilers and away from standards that favor the outdoor boiler manufacturers. Stay tuned to more updates from BTEC about what is surely to be a hotly contested regulation that will help chart the future of residential biomass heating in the US. For more information, contact Jack Ackerly at [jackerly@forgreenheat.org](mailto:jackerly@forgreenheat.org) or David Dungate at [dungate@actbioenergy.com](mailto:dungate@actbioenergy.com).

**\*\*NEW FEATURE\*\* - Upcoming Events Listing**

In order to keep you even more in the know about what is going on in the world of biomass thermal, use this new [Event Chart](#). It contains the necessary information you need to stay aware of conferences, expos, and shows that are important to the industry. As new events are announced, be sure to inform NEBTWG for inclusion in this resource.

Again, thank you for your support. Together, we are advancing biomass heating in the Northeast!

***About the Northeast Biomass Thermal Working Group***

The Northeast Biomass Thermal Working Group (NEBTWG) is a coalition of biomass thermal advocates committed to working together to advance the use of biomass for heating and CHP (combined heat and power) in the northeastern United States. Learn more at [www.nebioheat.org](http://www.nebioheat.org).