



## **Biomass-Fired District Energy Project Update**

July 26, 2004

Local Energy and their engineering partners at BIOS Bioenergy Systems have completed the preliminary design of a biomass-fired district energy system for Santa Fe, and BIOS' Managing Director, Dr. Ingwald Obernberger, traveled to Santa Fe last week to present the results.

In addition to designing a large system to heat hundreds of buildings in downtown Santa Fe with biomass from forest thinnings and other sources, Local Energy and BIOS have also completed preliminary designs for several smaller "micro-grid" energy systems at locations including the Rail Yard, the Community College, the College of Santa Fe, Los Arroyos Compound, and the South Capitol Complex.

All of the systems were shown to be technically feasible, and a survey of the available biomass within a 50-mile radius of Santa Fe identified more than enough fuel to sustainably power all of the systems – even if the planned expansion of local forest thinning projects does not materialize. The massive die-off of pinon trees currently underway was not considered in the calculation of the long-term sustainable fuel supply because it is unknown how much longer it will continue. In spite of this, the pinon do present an excellent fuel source in the near term!

All of the biomass systems showed significant potential to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, which is important for curbing global warming. By displacing natural gas usage, the biomass heating systems could provide the same heat with 66-75 percent lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The completion of the preliminary design study means that all of the information is now available to calculate the costs and benefits of building the biomass-fired energy systems. Local Energy will be continuing that effort over the next several months, after which BIOS will begin the detailed design effort on the systems that show the greatest potential to benefit the local economy.

Local Energy and BIOS continue to work with funding provided last year by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and are seeking additional funding sources to expand their efforts. A second proposal to the USDA, submitted this year, was unsuccessful, but that proposal was written prior to having technical results on the work initiated in the first round. With those results now in hand, the team is optimistic that additional funding will be awarded to support the project.

For additional information, contact Local Energy at (505) 982-9800 or visit us online at [www.localenergy.org](http://www.localenergy.org)