



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Partners Announce Biomass to Electricity Field Demonstration and Open House on February 23rd at Paws Up Ranch

Greenough, Montana, February 11th – The BioMax, a mobile biomass gasifier and electricity generator owned by the University of Montana, will be operating at Paws Up Ranch in the Blackfoot Valley this February. Beetle-killed trees and waste biomass will be processed by a Vermeer chipper to provide feedstock to the BioMax, which will then produce electricity.

“This is an exciting collaboration among motivated stakeholders in portable biomass technology,” says Brian Kerns, University of Montana Project Engineer and the BioMax’s operator. “Wood residues are usually left at site of production to be burned because such material is uneconomic to gather and transport. This demonstration changes that dynamic by bringing the generator to the source of supply. This is the first time such a project has been attempted.”

This electricity will be fed directly onto Missoula Electric Cooperative’s power lines. Once it is on the grid, Missoula Electric Cooperative will use it to power homes and ranches in the area.

“When our Board of Trustees was approached regarding participation in this project, the support was unanimous.” according to Mark Hayden, General Manager of Missoula Electric Cooperative. “The idea of distributed biomass generation would certainly improve the economics relating to bio-fuel transportation costs.”

The Seeley Swan Blackfoot Biomass Working Group is hosting an open house on February 23rd from 10am to 4:30pm. Members of the public are invited to watch the BioMax operate and enjoy a short presentation about the equipment. Refreshments will be provided. The demonstration is outdoors, so please dress appropriately for the weather.

Several partners helped make this demonstration and open house possible: Missoula Electric Cooperative, University of Montana, Paws Up Ranch, Seeley Swan Blackfoot Biomass Working Group, Natural Resource Conservation Services, United States Forest Service Forest Products Lab and Vermeer Corporation.

Directions: From Highway 200E, turn onto the ranch road at mile marker 25.75 (right if eastbound, left if westbound) through two brown pole gates. Follow the signs to the parking area.

For more information about attending the open house please contact:

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