

Community Biomass Handbook and Wood Energy Financial Application

Background

- This handbook and financial app helps communities quickly determine if biomass energy projects might work for them.
- Saves significant time, resources, and investment by weeding out wood energy projects that may never come to fruition from those with a chance of success.
- Gives rural communities a wider array of options for building industries that can effectively use materials removed in forest restoration and fire risk reduction activities.
- Helps rural communities, businesses, and agency staff understand the right mix of technical, financial, and engineering capacity necessary to effectively execute related enterprise development.

Key features

- Connecting forest planning with value chain and prefeasibility analysis in an interactive PDF, eBook, and conventional Web page format.
- Showcasing successful projects using text, photos, video interviews, and diagrams to facilitate virtual project planning and interaction with experts.
- Providing an interactive financial calculator to estimate capital investment costs to facilitate project design and screening across a variety of wood energy options. The calculator can be accessed from the eBook or from the Web: <http://www.woodenergy.umn.edu>.

Examples of current activities

- Improving delivery and performance of federal investments in wood energy that reduce the cost to government through project prescreening and prioritization.
- Establishing technical, financial, and social criteria and indicators to evaluate proposed biomass investment options.
- Providing local communities, businesses, and Forest Service staff with an interactive financial application tool allowing self-assessment of proposed projects prior to engaging in costly feasibility studies.
- Facilitating opportunities for state and federal officials to work closely with local businesses and organizations to design and implement wood energy projects that expedite forest restoration and fire risk reduction activities.



Who benefits directly?

- Rural communities and local government benefit directly through increased jobs and wealth retention by replacing heating oil and propane with wood energy.
- Forest products industry infrastructure is expanded and diversified.
- Public and private financial institutions benefit through building enhanced knowledge of wood energy investment options and risks.

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