

Green Institute

NEWS RELEASE

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Biomass Fuels Assessment Completed for Rock-Tenn

Minneapolis, MN. Today the Green Institute announced the release of a study assessing the potential for biomass fuels to meet the energy needs for the Rock-Tenn recycled paper mill in St. Paul. The company is one of the Twin Cities' largest energy consumers and will lose its coal-based source of steam by the end of the year when the Xcel Energy High Bridge plant is shut down and replaced with a natural gas power plant. Rock-Tenn intends to use existing fuel oil and natural gas boilers at its plant as an interim strategy until a better environmental and economically viable long-term solution is found. The plant employs nearly 500 people.

There is broad interest in finding another viable energy source at Rock-Tenn in order to maintain a stable manufacturing jobs base and recycling capacity in the state, preserve air quality, and increase the sustainability of energy sources. After extensive discussions during the first half of 2006, the Green Institute was contracted by a diverse group of private industry, governmental, and nonprofit organizations to conduct an independent assessment of biomass fuels.

Five broad categories of woody and agricultural sources of biomass are considered in the study. Long-term available quantities of these sources are assessed, and approximate costs for collecting, processing, storing and transporting the fuel are calculated. The study provides Rock-Tenn with new, additional information about viable fuel source options. The assessment does not include processed municipal solid waste, known as refuse-derived-fuel (RDF), for which a study has already been completed.

An independent technical advisory committee of top biomass experts was also assembled to assist with the project. In addition to Rock-Tenn and the Green Institute, the project was sponsored by the City of St. Paul, Ramsey/Washington Counties, the St. Paul Port Authority, Eureka Recycling and Resource Recovery Technologies (RRT).

According to the report's chief author, Carl Nelson, "choosing the fuel source is an important part of developing a new energy supply for Rock-Tenn. However, there are many other interconnected pieces to the puzzle, including the selection of the energy conversion technology and associated capital costs, necessary pollution control equipment and financing that need to be considered before settling on a final fuel mix. We don't have all the answers for Rock-Tenn, but we hope that that our study will be useful in crafting a solution to their energy needs."

Rock-Tenn Senior Vice President and General Manager Jack Greenshields had the opportunity to review a draft of the document and stated "This report represents the best and current understanding of biomass fuels potential in the Twin Cities area and is a crucial first step to realizing a renewable biomass energy center for Rock-Tenn and the surrounding community."

Meetings are being planned for May to discuss the results of the study with neighborhood groups and other interested parties. A date has not been set, but an email listserv, “Rock-Tenn Interested Neighbors,” has been set up by neighborhood groups. When a date is set for an information meeting, listserv members will be notified. Interested persons are encouraged to join the listserv by going to the following URL: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RTIN/>.

The Green Institute is a nonprofit dedicated to sustaining the environment and communities through practical innovation. The organization operates a \$2 million salvaged building materials enterprise known as the ReUse Center/DeConstruction Services, which reclaims for resale more than 4,000 tons of construction materials per year that would otherwise be landfilled. The Institute also maintains active green building and community energy programs.

The report is available on the Green Institute’s website: www.greeninstitute.org, under the “Community Energy” section.

Contacts for the project sponsors of the report are as follows:

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St. Paul Port Authority	Peter Klein	(651) 224-5686
Ramsey/Washington Counties	Zack Hansen	(651) 266-1160
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Eureka Recycling	Susan Hubbard	(651) 222-7678
Resource Recovery Technologies (RRT)	Judy Purman	(952) 946-6999

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