



Ontario Centres of
Excellence

Where Next Happens

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ontario Centres of Excellence hosts Atikokan Bio-energy Research Centre progress review

THUNDER BAY— Researchers, students, and local, provincial and federal government officials will gather at the Ontario Power Generation's (OPG) Atikokan Station today for the first annual progress review of the Atikokan Bio-Energy Research Centre (ABRC).

Hosted by OPG and the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE), the session will bring together academics, industry partners and government officials to share and review research results to date.

"I have directed the Ontario Power Authority to look at the potential of converting existing coal-fired assets to biomass so I am very pleased that the Atikokan Bio-energy Research Centre is making progress and looking at future opportunities," said George Smitherman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. "Finding new economic opportunities in the North is important to Ontario's growth and exploring new energy technologies can be key to that development."

The ABRC is a \$4 million initiative by the provincial government announced in the 2006 Ontario Budget. With industry support, the project, designed to encourage alternative fuel sources, now has an overall value of more than \$8.6 million.

Six ABRC projects - involving seven academic institutions, 87 students and 29 key industrial partners – are now being conducted. The research projects focus on:

- Direct and indirect methods of co-firing peat and forest biomass with coal
- Assessing the environmental impacts of peat as a potential energy source
- Maximising the economic benefit of utilizing wood biomass with energy production
- Optimizing power plant combustion processes for co-fired biomass fuels
- New technology to monitor mercury emissions
- Enhancing the capacity in Northwestern Ontario to develop a sustainable wood pellet industry

Today's session will include presentations by research project leaders, and their students, as well as discussions exploring commercialization opportunities, and the long-term potential for conversion of the power station to run on biomass.

"Already abundant with natural resources, Northwestern Ontario has highly skilled researchers, industrial partners and the collective vision to establish the province as a leader in bio-energy technologies," said Mark Romoff, OCE's President and CEO. "Working together here at Atikokan, we have an opportunity to play a significant role in Ontario's changing energy landscape."

OCE's Centre of Excellence for Energy is playing a key role in developing and managing the ABRC, along with a steering committee that includes representation from the Ontario Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure and OPG, as well as regular input from the Township of Atikokan.

About Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) Inc. (www.oce-ontario.org)

Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) Inc. drives the commercialization of cutting-edge research across key market sectors to build the economy of tomorrow and secure Ontario's global competitiveness. OCE also fosters the training and development of the next generation of innovators, entrepreneurs and business leaders, and is a key partner with Ontario's industry, universities, colleges, research hospitals, investors and governments. OCE's five Centres work in communications and information technology, earth and environmental technologies, energy, materials and manufacturing and photonics. OCE is funded in part by the government of Ontario and is a key partner in delivering Ontario's Innovation Agenda.

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