

## Southern Bioenergy Network News – May 2014 Edition

Dear Southern Bioenergy Network Partners,

Welcome to the May 2014 edition of the Southern Bioenergy Network News. This compilation of news and articles reflects some of the actions taken at the international, national, regional and state levels that have implications on bioenergy development.

The most recent news is the continued failure of energy policy to gain traction in the U.S. Congress. On the heels of the failed Portman-Sheehan bill which would have created incentives and measures for increased energy efficiency in homes, businesses, and federal buildings, the Senate voted to halt further action the “tax extenders” package bill. The tax extenders bill includes incentives for biofuels, biopower, wind energy and a host of other economic development issues. The lack of cooperation in the Congress is also reflected in the polarized discussions around natural gas exports and Keystone XL pipeline approval. The continued Congressional dysfunction around energy issues reflects the need for a comprehensive approach for national energy policy.

In other actions, the USDA-Rural Development announced funding for the first round of applications submitted for Rural Energy for America Program grants and guaranteed loans. These funds can be used for the installation and construction of renewable energy and energy efficiency equipment and upgrades. Applications are due July 7. A second round of funds are expected later in the summer.

Please note that planning has begun for the 2014 National Bioenergy Day. After the inaugural 2013 National Bioenergy Day that saw 25 events in 14 states, supporters hope to make this an annual event and grow the number of participants. With National Bioenergy Day, bioenergy advocates hope to engage citizens, media, and community and state leaders and use this event to highlight the use of bioenergy as a clean, efficient, resourceful way to power and heat homes, businesses and commercial operations and to produce the next generation of clean biofuels. The event can also feature production and conversion methods of sustainable biomass resources.

SAFER/25x'25 is asking you to help promote National Bioenergy Day, recruit local companies/organizations to host an event, and recruit local sponsors. National Bioenergy Day 2014 will be held on Wednesday, October 22. Download the [participation form](#). Please circulate to potential event sites and/or indicate your own participation. Also, download and share the [promotional flyer](#) that provides more information about National Bioenergy Day and sponsorship opportunities.

The Southeast had great participation last year with events held at Recast Energy in KY, Craven County Wood Energy in NC, Mississippi State University’s Sustainable Energy Research Center, and Auburn University’s Mobile Gasifier Unit making stops in TN, AL and GA. I hope that we can increase participation this year and highlight the resources of the region and the various projects that are taking us into a new bioeconomy.

Thanks for your continued support of the Southern Bioenergy Network and of SAFER. If you have not yet done so, I want to invite you to you to become a partner of SAFER. Please go to the SAFER Alliance website at [www.saferalliance.net](http://www.saferalliance.net) and look for the “Partners” link. [Joining](#) is easy and there are no membership fees. Your support and partnership is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

*Brent Bailey*

Brent Bailey  
25x'25 Alliance  
State Activities Coordinator  
SAFER Alliance  
Project Coordinator

New from around the world and around the nation that impacts our region's bioenergy development vision:

### **International**

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UN IPCC) released their "[Bioenergy and Climate Change Mitigation: An Assessment](#)" report that confirmed that **biofuels production is economically beneficial** and that Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC) modelling is unverifiable.

Europe's boom in biomass demand has led to a **doubling of wood pellet exports from North America** in just two years to reach 4.7 million tons in 2013, according to the latest data. The US South shipped almost three million tons last year, which was almost two-thirds of total export volume from North America. Get more details [here](#).

### **National**

USDA-Rural Development is [inviting applications](#) for **rural energy efficiency and renewable energy** projects. The REAP program supports installation of EE and RE equipment on farms and at small rural businesses with cost-share grants up to 25% of the total project cost. The deadline for submitting an applications is July 7. There will likely be an additional funding availability announcement later in the year. To find the contact for your state USDA office, click here: <http://farmenergy.org/tools/state-level-usda-contacts>

The National Climate Assessment is now public at <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/>. It includes impacts by US region (Midwest, Southeast, etc), and by sector (water, agriculture, health, etc). The National Climate Assessment summarizes the **impacts of climate change** on the United States, now and in the future. State by state climate fact sheets at the link below:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/05/06/what-climate-change-means-regions-across-america>

The Bioenergy Technologies Office has announced a request for information (RFI) seeking stakeholder input on the [eight representative biofuel pathways](#) it has selected to guide its research and development strategy. The Office also is seeking input on other pre-commercial pathways it should consider in the near to long term. All responses to this RFI must be submitted electronically no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on May 30, 2014.

About 6.2% of total U.S. electricity supplies in 2013 were generated from nonhydro renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, **biomass**, and geothermal, up from 5.4% in 2012. But 11 states produced electricity at more than twice the national average from these sources—accounting for between 14% and 32% of their net electric generation—according to preliminary [2013 generation data](#) in EIA's [Electric Power Monthly](#) report.

New U.S. EIA data shows that the **U.S. added 549 MW of biomass-fired power plant capacity** last year. According to the EIA, 511 MW of that capacity was from wood-fire or wood waste-fired facilities. The remaining 38 MW of capacity is fired with other forms of biomass, including biogenic municipal solid waste, landfill gas, sludge waste, agricultural byproducts and others. Additional information is available on the EIA [website](#).

Check out RFA's video "**5 Reasons to Love the RFS**." The two-and-a-half-minute short outlines how the RFS saves consumers money, reduces U.S. dependence on foreign oil, cuts greenhouse gas emissions, creates jobs and encourages investment and innovation. The video is a guide meant to educate and inform newcomers and industry insiders alike. [View the new video](#).

The Energy Department announced up to \$10 million in **funding to advance the production of advanced biofuels**, substitutes for petroleum-based feedstocks, and bioproducts made from renewable, non-food-based biomass. The Energy Department encourages industry to invest in the production of cost-competitive, advanced biofuels and bioproducts from renewable, abundant biomass. For more information and application requirements, visit the [Funding Opportunity Exchange website](#).

The U.S. EPA has published its proposed rule to amend its Non-Hazardous Secondary Materials regulation in the Federal Register, officially opening a 60-day comment period. The proposal classifies **wood fuel from construction and demolition debris**. Comments can be submitted online at [Regulations.gov](#) under Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-RCRA-2013-0110. Additional information on the proposed rule is published in the [Federal Register](#).

There are six "grand challenges" facing the United States over the next decade according to a report from the national Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). The challenges include **sustainability, water, climate change, agriculture, energy and education**. The "[Science, Education, and Outreach Roadmap for Natural Resources](#)" is the first comprehensive, nationwide report on research, education and outreach needs for natural resources conducted by the APLU.

## Regional

The EESI invites you to a briefing examining the current and projected **impacts of climate change in the Southeast**, and efforts to manage these risks. According to the NOAA, the Southeast region has experienced more billion-dollar natural disasters than any other region in the United States, primarily from hurricanes, but also from tornadoes and winter storms. The briefing will be held on May 22, 2014 at 10:00 am ET. A live webcast will be streamed. Get more info and register [here](#).

In Washington, the [Navy plans to set up two solicitations for advanced biofuels](#) this year by way of the Defense Production Act. The Navy believes it will be able to source the fuels at a price competitive with existing fossil fuel supplies, rather than paying several times the current fossil fuel price as it has done in the past.

The Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) is **driving billions of dollars of economic activity across America**. This is the result of years of investment by the biofuel sector to bring clean, low carbon renewable fuels to market. Fuels America has released [its interactive map which includes economic data](#) by Congressional district.

See the [May 2014 edition](#) of the **IBSS Newsletter**. This month: lignin biosynthesis; fast-growing hardwoods; biochar; conference dates; and more.

The U.S. Forest Service is seeking [proposals](#) that expand **wood energy use and support responsible forest management**. The Forest Service also released a Wood Energy Financial App for use by community and business leaders seeking to replace fossil fuel with wood energy.

### In the States

ACEEE's new [State and Local Policy Database](#) includes **comprehensive information on energy efficiency policies** currently implemented at the state and local level. The database tracks policy activity across multiple sectors, including state and local governments, utilities, transportation, buildings, combined heat and power, and appliance standards.

A [survey](#) conducted by the **National Biodiesel Board** found that a vast majority of U.S. biofuel producers have either idled or scaled back production in 2014 in response to the expiration of the biodiesel tax incentive and potential volume cuts in the EPA's Renewable Fuels Standard proposal.

#### Florida

[Harvest Power's](#) Energy Garden in Lake Buena Vista, FL won the American Biogas Council's **Merchant Biogas Project of the Year** award for its first-of-a-kind anaerobic digester that converts organic waste into renewable biogas and natural fertilizers, diverting hundreds of thousands of tons of waste from Central Florida landfills. When operating at full capacity, the facility will process 130,000 tons of organic materials annually and produce 5.4 megawatts of combined heat and power.

#### Kentucky

Gov. Beshear [announced](#) funding to help create an environmentally-friendly **methane gas recovery system** in the city of Glasgow that will also save taxpayer dollars. The new system will harness the gas emitted from the Glasgow Regional Landfill and turn it into electricity.

#### Louisiana

Louisiana sugarcane producers may one day have a stake in the U.S. plastics industry, with the help of LSU AgCenter researchers. LSU AgCenter personnel at the Audubon Sugar Institute are studying how to make **plastic from a byproduct of sugar production**. Aconitic acid, an organic acid found in significant levels in energycane, sugarcane and sweet sorghum juices, is a potential source of biodegradable plastics. Learn more about this research [here](#).

The **130-million gallon per year [Diamond Green Diesel](#)** facility in Norco, Louisiana, has started up, using Honeywell's UOP/Eni Ecofining process technology. The facility converts inedible oils and other waste feedstocks to produce high-quality [renewable diesel](#) which is chemically identical to petroleum-based diesel and can be used as a drop-in replacement in vehicles with no modifications.

[Syntroleum Fuels is looking to sell its 50% interest in the Dynamic Fuels plant it co-owns with Tyson Foods](#). Located in Geismar, the \$150 million plant has been idle since November 2012 and costs each owner \$1 million per month to sit in standby mode. Originally expected to produce **75 million gallons of renewable fuel per year** from low grade chicken fat, the plant has lost an estimated \$20 million in potential sales while the [owners dispute restart conditions](#).

## Mississippi

KiOR has submitted information in its most recent 10-Q quarterly report filing with the SEC **that does not bode well for future operation of the KiOR facility** in Columbus. “We have suspended all optimization projects we began during the first quarter of 2014 in order to bring the Columbus facility to a safe, idle state..... We do not believe we can restart the Columbus facility on an economically viable basis at this time and therefore cannot be certain as to whether we will be able to successfully secure additional financing or the ultimate timing of such additional financing. [The complete 10-Q filing is here.](#)

## Missouri

Gov. Jay Nixon announced that the Missouri Department of Economic Development’s Division of Energy will lead a **statewide initiative to develop a comprehensive energy plan for the state**. In public meetings across the state, the initiative will solicit input from energy stakeholders including consumers, businesses, public utilities, renewable energy companies, academic researchers and environmental advocates. See press release [here](#).

## North Carolina

RTI International has just released a new study commissioned by the NC Sustainable Energy Association. The study, the [The Economic Impact Analysis of Clean Energy Development in North Carolina](#), provides a series of key findings that reveal sizeable contributions to jobs, investment and savings in North Carolina from clean energy development. Of note, from 2007-2013, **biomass made up 6% of total renewable energy investments while producing 72% of the 6.8 million MWh generated.**

REPREEVE Renewables reports that North Carolina farmers and landowners are participating in a [unique program](#) to **grow giant miscanthus grass for renewable product solutions**. This innovative program provides farmers with an economic alternative for underutilized and marginal land.

## Oklahoma

Utility customers who want to install rooftop solar panels or small wind turbines could face **extra charges on their bills** after legislation passed the Oklahoma House of Representatives and the Senate last month. The bill was signed by Gov. Mary Fallin. See [Senate Bill 1456](#).

## Tennessee

Genera Energy Inc. has [announced](#) a 14 percent **reduction in harvest costs** utilizing Genera’s recently demonstrated in-field harvesting operations when compared to similar operations using typical field-edge systems. On the receiving end, unload time for bulk harvested material improved 21 percent over the previous harvest.

## Texas

NRG Energy Services has been granted the right to operate the 57-megawatt Aspen Power **biomass power plant** in East Texas for at least a year while the unit is marketed to potential buyers. The Lufkin News (<http://bit.ly/1mLRXjp>) reports that the facility in Lufkin could reopen within a month.

Using mesquite **biomass for electricity generation** may become economically feasible if ecological and agricultural factors are considered, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Research [paper](#) being published in the *BioEnergy Research* journal.

## Vermont

The Vermont Bioenergy Initiative has launched a [new website](#), which provides a series of written and video resources in these **emerging fields of bioenergy**. The Vermont Bioenergy Initiative has been active since 2003, providing research, technical assistance, and demonstration projects for the renewable energy industry.

## Events

The [2014 SC Clean Energy Summit](#) on July 9, 2014, in Columbia, SC will continue to provide excellent programing and networking opportunities for attendees. The South Carolina Clean Energy Business Alliance will continue the tradition of providing high level moderated sessions focusing on the clean energy topics which matter most - policy development, economic development and emerging technologies. Additionally, the 2014 SC Clean Energy Summit will feature over three hours of facilitated networking time for all attendees.

The recent Bioenergy Fuels & Products Conference & Expo was held March 18-19 at the Omni Hotel at CNN Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The success of this second conference has prompted the organizers to announce that the third Bioenergy conference will be held April 5-6, 2016 at the same venue. The presentations .pdfs for Bioenergy 2014 are accessible by clicking on the link:

<http://bioenergyshow.com/2014-presentations/>