Sustainable Practices 2005

Innovations, Technologies, and Products
Coming Soon to a World Near You
January 28, 2005

Minnesota Creates Agroforestry Advance Loan Fund. The State of Minnesota has created a new revolving loan fund designed to deliver the environmental and economic benefits of perennial cover crops such as poplar trees grown on marginal farm land. The State Department of Agriculture created the fund, providing farmers a 4% interest rate to help in covering up front costs of planting a crop that, in the case of hybrid (non-GMO) poplar, doesn't mature for up to 15 years. Poplar wood can be used for paper, oriented strand board, and ethanol production. (Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network, December 17, 2004, http://www.forestrycenter.org/News/news.cfm?News_ID=659)

Company to Repower Old California Wind Farms Plus Produce Hydrogen. U.S. Wind Framing Inc. will soon be repowering old wind energy farms in California. The company will be establishing cooperatives and repowering existing wind farms in Palm Springs, Tehachapi, and Altamont Pass, California. The cooperatives will be small distributed units, with 6-10 GE wind turbines on each property. The cooperatives will utilize existing electrical delivery infrastructure to deliver power from the 45 MW of new turbine capacity. The repowering will consist of the replacement of two to three decades old wind turbines with advanced technology wind turbines. Power produced will be delivered to the grid for sale to the local utility during peak demand times. During off-peak times, the turbines' electricity will flow to Stuart Energy's decentralized hydrogen technology for production, pressurization, storage and delivery to the local infrastructure. (North American Windpower, January 2005, http://www.nawindpower.com)

"Siphonic" Commodes Help Cut Water Use in Half. Over the last 30 years, the gallons-per-flush rating for toilets has fallen from 7 to 3.5 to 1.6, when Federal law mandated that builders use low-flush toilets. Now, manufacturers have found a solution in their efforts to perfect a toilet that uses even less water. Most of the new models replace the rubber flapper with a silicon gasket and calibrated plunger. Bowls and trapways have been redesigned and some models now feature a siphonic model using suction and a narrow passage rather than traditional gravity/wide trapway models. A dual flush feature tops the advances, dispensing either 1.6 gallons or 0.8 gallons. These models are expected to save the user more than 3,000 gallons per year. The USEPA has judged the dual flush type to be more effective and more efficient than the old standard. (Popular Science, February 2005, http://www.popsci.com/popsci/whatsnew/article/0,20967,1016489,00.html)

Sustainable Practices 2005 *is a weekly information service compiled from publicly available sources and provided by EPA Region 8's Sustainable Practices and State Partnerships Program. For more information, contact David Schaller, 303-312-6146,* ***schaller.david@epa.gov***