



A Program of the Maine Public Utilities Commission

Press Release

Three Alternative Energy Projects Receive Nearly \$100,000 from VRRF

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AUGUSTA, Maine – Three alternative energy projects from various parts of Maine have been awarded nearly \$100,000 from the Voluntary Renewable Resources Fund (VRRF) which is administered by Efficiency Maine, a program of the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC).

The Voluntary Renewable Resources Fund was established by the Legislature in 2000 and is supported by voluntary contributions made by consumers on their electric bill. The fund makes contributions to small scale community projects that contribute to the development of new renewable sources of energy and which serve as demonstration projects designed to educate the community on the value and cost effectiveness of harnessing natural resources.

This is the eighth year the VRRF has awarded grants.

This year the three successful grant applications involve solar energy and wind power.

On announcing the grants today, MPUC Chairman Sharon Reishus said the VRRF provides a catalyst for promising new energy technologies and that through the Fund, Maine residents have the opportunity to lead the way in promoting renewable energy sources and a cleaner environment

"It is very exciting that two of the successful grant applications this year were from schools where the alternative energy projects will be used as part of the science, social studies and math curriculum.

" This demonstrates that Maine's students are not only studying in an environment powered in part by alternative energy sources, but are also learning

about the importance of alternative energy sources in very practical ways, " she said.

The Great Salt Bay Community School in Damariscotta received a grant of \$5,334 for the purchase and installation of double-sided solar panel modules and accompanying inverter with a display function.

Commissioner Reishus said this project was not only initiated by students in their "Energy Explorer" group, but they were also responsible for raising the 20 percent matching funds required and stipulated by the VRRF grant process.

"This will be very much a hands on project as it will be used as a teaching tool in science curriculum, social studies and math classes," she said.

The Knowlton School in North Berwick which is a regional school for 6th graders, received \$43,761 for the purchase and installation of 24 solar panels on 2 poles, and a tracking system to follow the sun. Students will be able to collect real time data that will be made available for viewing and study through portals on school and district websites, and on an LCD panel installed at the entrance of the school.

The solar panels will produce nearly 7000 kilowatts of electricity per year.

Commissioner Reishus said students at The Knowlton School, particularly those in the school's "Solar Club", will not only be using the project as part of their curriculum for 6th grade science classes, but would also be going out into the community educating community groups on solar power using the project as a real life example.

A third VRRF grant of \$50,000 was awarded to the Pittsfield Recycling Center/Transfer station for the purchase of a wind turbine.

Commissioner Reishus said the project would produce an estimated 9,238 kilowatts of clean electricity annually and the Town intended to use it as an educational tool on wind power for local residents.

"Station employees will receive training on the benefits of the project and will provide public tours of the system. The town also will hold an art contest for middle school children to design the wind program logo for display at the center and for literature to be distributed as part of the project." she said.

For more information on the Voluntary Renewable Resource Fund, please contact Shirley Bartlett of the PUC at 287-3318 or Shirley.bartlett@maine.gov or visit the MPUC website - www.maine.gov/mpuc/

The Maine Public Utilities Commission is committed to ensuring that consumers have access to safe and reliable service for public utilities and that the rates for these utilities are just and reasonable. MPUC programs include Maine Enhanced 911 Service, Dig Safe, and Efficiency Maine.

To arrange an interview with Chairman Reishus, Commissioner Vendean Vafiades or Commissioner Jack Cashman, please contact Fred Bever at 207.287.6141 or by e-mail at fred.bever@maine.gov. The Commission's website, www.maine.gov/mpuc may be accessed through the Maine School and Library Network at all public libraries in Maine.