



Governor's Energy Office

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**“GOVERNOR’S ENERGY OFFICE AWARDS COMMUNITY WOODY BIOMASS GRANT TO
MOUNTAIN PARK ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER”**

DENVER– The Governor’s Energy Office (GEO) announced that it has awarded a “Community Woody Biomass Utilization Grant” to the Mountain Park Environmental Center, an environmental education organization based in Beulah.

The Mountain Park Environmental Center (MPEC) will use GEO’s \$13,000 in funding to develop engineering and electrical design plans for the installation of a biomass boiler to heat its newly renovated Horseshoe Lodge. The design plans for MPEC are available for future woody biomass projects as a design template which will help facilitate additional projects and reduce costs. Along with the biomass boiler, many other sustainable features will be incorporated into the renovation project, including recycled insulation, composting toilets and showers with low-flow heads.

“MPEC is an environmental education organization proud to have the opportunity to turn an historic WPA-built structure into our new center,” says MPEC director and founder Dave Van Manen. “Our focus is on education, and the biomass heating system will be a great educational tool while simultaneously utilizing a local source of energy to heat this wonderful old building.”

The renovation project will result in a four-season retreat and education center located in the ponderosa pine forests of Colorado’s Wet Mountains. The first phase of the project will be completed late this summer and will become the new headquarters of the nine-year old MPEC.

“Using local woody biomass for heating at the Mountain Park Environmental Center allows the community to turn a waste stream into a free, clean, renewable fuel and helps address forest health benefits. This demonstration will be a great educational example for MPEC’s visitors on how communities can use renewable energy” said Stacey Simms, biofuels and local fuels program manager for the Governor’s Energy Office.

The Community Woody Biomass Utilization Grant was created using Clean Energy Funds to foster forest health and build sustainable communities. The grants are administered by GEO and disseminated to communities that are promoting forest health thinning activities, or seeking solutions to the pine beetle epidemic for the utilization of their wood in local heating projects.

MPEC provides outdoor-based education programs for all ages, with a specialty in hands-on outdoor education for young people. MPEC is a formal partner with Pueblo City Schools to provide comprehensive environmental education through a multi-day outdoor-based curriculum, entitled Earth Studies. Earth Studies was awarded Best New Program of 2003 by the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education.

For more information about the grants, including the application information and deadlines, visit the Governor’s Energy Office, www.colorado.gov/energy. To learn more about Mountain Park Environmental Center, or learn how to support the biomass project, visit www.hikeandlearn.org.

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