

FEDERAL NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



companies that specialize in natural gas processing or power generation.

Congress set a deadline of February 1998 to sell the field if sufficiently high bids are received. DOE has said it would sell its share of Elk Hills field only if it receives bids that are higher than the value of the asset to the government.

—US DEPT. OF ENERGY
10/10/96

PRAIRIE GRASS TO YIELD NEW POWER

■(WASHINGTON) Merging Iowa's agricultural potential with long-term energy needs is the underpinning for a new, cost-shared cooperative research and development pact between Chariton Valley Research, Conservation and Development (RC&D) in Southern Iowa, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The new public/private partnership — worth an estimated \$20 million over a four-year period, including a 47 percent federal investment — will grow switchgrass on 30,000 to 40,000 acres of underutilized, marginal cropland.

Currently, switchgrass is used primarily to reduce soil erosion. In this program, switchgrass will also be grown as an "energy crop" and used to generate 35 megawatts of electrical power — enough to light some 40,000 homes — by mixing it with coal at existing power plants.

Five hundred local farmers and landowners will be paired in the Chariton Valley RC&D partnership with the combined research and investment power of 14 organizations representing a broad cross section of business, community, public utility and governmental interests.

The partners have received authorization from USDA for a 4,000-acre demonstration project supporting the development of energy crops as the Conservation Reserve Program is phased out. If successful, the project will help farmers and landowners to harvest

new and sustainable income as a lasting alternative to traditional federal farm subsidies. In addition, the increased use of home-grown renewable energy will keep more energy dollars in Iowa, having the net effect of even greater economic benefits.

—US DEPT. OF ENERGY
10/10/96

ENVIRONMENT

EPA ISSUES FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE ON FACILITY IDENTIFICATION INITIATIVE

■(WASHINGTON) The Environmental Protection Agency is issuing a Federal Register Notice to the public soliciting comments on the Agency's Facility Identification Initiative. The goal of the program is to streamline the collection of identifying information from facilities subject to federal environmental reporting requirements and provide the public with easier access to this data.

The initiative would for the first time provide the public with a single identification for industrial facilities that report environmental information to federal and state governments.

The notice, to appear in the Federal Register the week of Oct. 7, contains a detailed discussion of the issues and poses a number of questions for public comment. For more information, call Diane Sheridan at 202-260-3435 or e-mail:

sheridan.diane@epamail.epa.gov.
—ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
10/07/96

EPA RETAINS NITROGEN DIOXIDE STANDARD

■(WASHINGTON) Based on the latest scientific evidence, revisions to the national existing ambient (atmospheric) air quality standards (NAAQS) for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) are not appropriate at this time, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced Friday.

The Agency concluded that current standards — .053 parts per million, measured as an annual average — are adequate to protect public health and the environment from the direct effects of nitrogen dioxide. NO₂ belongs to a family of highly reactive gases that form when fuel is burned at high temperatures and are emitted primarily from motor vehicle exhaust and power plants.

Although no areas of the country have violated the NO₂ standards for the past three

years, EPA remains concerned about emissions of this gas, which can contribute to other environmental problems, such as ground-level ozone (smog) and acid rain.

To combat these emissions, EPA has:

- Introduced tighter tailpipe emission standards for 1994-96 cars (and is currently developing regulations in partnership with California and heavy-duty engine manufacturers to cut emissions from buses and trucks).

- Required stringent controls on large NO₂ sources, such as power plants, in areas failing to meet smog standards.

- Finalized acid rain rules for coal-fired utility boilers that will slash NO₂ emissions 1.2 million tons annually by the year 2000.

In addition, the Ozone Transport Commission (made up of 11 northeastern states and Washington, DC) signed a memorandum of understanding in 1994 to reduce NO₂ emission levels up to 75 percent by the year 2003.

For further technical information on the decision, contact Chebryll Edwards of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at 919-541-5428.

—ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
10/08/96

ANOTHER CITY ADDED TO THE CLEAN CITIES PROGRAM

■(WASHINGTON) Secretary of Energy Hazel R. O'Leary last week welcomed the Hampton Roads area as the 49th member of the Clean Cities program. The Hampton Roads Clean Cities coalition which includes such cities as Norfolk, Hampton, Newport News, and Virginia Beach among its 29 area stakeholders, becomes the first Virginia-based coalition to join the voluntary Clean Cities Program.

Clean Cities is designed to promote the use of alternative fuels and alternative fuel vehicles (AFV), alleviate air pollution in major U.S. cities, reduce dependence on imported oil, and stimulate local economic activity. Introduced in September 1993, Clean Cities creates locally based public/private sector partnerships to advance the use of alternative fuels through local investment and infrastructure development.

Other DOE Clean Cities include Central Oklahoma; Atlanta; Denver; Philadelphia; Wilmington, DE; Las Vegas; Washington, DC; Boston; Austin; Florida Gold Coast; Chicago; Albuquerque; Wisconsin (SE area);

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"Wealth is the means, and people are the ends. All our material riches will avail us little if we do not use them to expand the opportunities of our people."

John F. Kennedy
State of the Union message
Jan. 11, 1962