

**Biomass Energy Panel**  
**Room 2 (2<sup>ND</sup> floor)**  
**Friday, Oct. 24, 3:30-5pm**

### **III. Biomass Energy**

With fossil fuel prices on the rise, biomass energy—created by burning plant or animal matter—is becoming a cost-efficient substitute in heating homes and powering our vehicles. Alaska has roughly 129 million acres of forest, of which up to 5,000,000 acres is lost per year to forest fires and insect infestations. Two outcomes can result from better forest management and proper harvesting of trees and deadfall: 1) a decrease of fire hazards and insect breeding grounds, and 2) the excess debris can become a renewable and sustainable source of energy on a large scale. In Unalaska, fish oil fuel is used at the Unisea fish processing plant, displacing over one million gallons of diesel annually. The advantages of biomass to the household and economy are numerous, and include green energy initiatives and carbon credits, cost savings over fossil fuel, job creation and overall economic development. Panelists will discuss the various biomass projects that are already underway in Alaska and the key factors that contribute to a successful project.

1. *Chair:* Bruce Tiedeman, Coordinator of Rural Community Outreach, Alaska Energy Authority
2. Ron Brown, Project Manager, Alaska Energy Authority
3. Bear Ketzler, Jr., CEO, Interior Regional Housing Authority
4. Steven J. Morello, Director, Department of Energy's Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs
5. Dennis E. Witmer, Ph.D., Director, Arctic Energy Technology Development Lab of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

#### **Questions & Answers:**

If you have a questions for any of the panelists, please write it down on a piece of paper and submit it to a volunteer who will be collecting questions and handing them to the Chair. Index cards will also be provided. With this process we hope to answer many more questions from the audience. Emails are also provided for panelists in their bios below.

### **Panelists' Biographies**

#### **Ron Brown, Alaska Energy Authority**

Ron has been a project manager with the Alaska Energy Authority for the past 5 years, working on bulk fuel storage and power plant upgrades in rural Alaska. Ron lived in Kotzebue for over 20 years, working on water/sewer, road, landfill and other capital improvement projects. Ron lived in Barrow for three years and worked on water/sewer and environmental clean-up projects. He has recently become involved in wood energy projects in an effort to help rural communities become more energy independent and reduce high costs. Mr. Brown has many grandchildren, in-laws and friends at Kotzebue and Noorvik who are faced with the high cost of living each and every day, and he is committed to doing something about it. His goal in the coming year is to turn as many wood energy projects into reality as possible. (rbrown@aidea.org)

#### **Bear Ketzler, Interior Regional Housing Authority**

For the past 25 years, Bear Ketzler has been involved with economic development in the Interior of Alaska.

The focus of much of his efforts has been directed through positions at Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and in private sector investments. As TCC's director of agriculture and later as director of planning and development, he led efforts to promote local sustainability in food production and small business creation. In that regard, he wrote and analyzed grant applications, managed a revolving loan program, and developed new programs and services. More recently, Mr. Ketzler worked as the tribal administrator for the Nenana Native Council, assuring the day-to-day management of program grants and tribal government operations. He worked as City Manager for the City of Tanana to convert a sizable portion of tribal/city utilities from fuel oil to wood-fired hot water and solar electricity. Is currently the CEO of Interior Regional Housing Authority focusing on planning and implementation of alternative energy. Nenana is Bear Ketzler's family's village; he served in the Marine Corps from 1975-1977. (Tel. 452-8315 x108.)

### **Steven J. Morello, DOE's Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs**

The Honorable Steven J. Morello serves as deputy assistant secretary at the Department of Energy (DOE) and as director of the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs. In this dual capacity, Steve provides, directs, fosters, coordinates, and implements energy planning, education, management, conservation, and delivery programs focused on renewable and sustainable energy in Indian Country and throughout Native Alaska. Just prior to this, Steve was a managing member of Native Insurance Agency LLC, an SBA-certified small business that he founded. He has also been in private practice in his own law firm, Native Law Group PC. NLG has represented Steve's tribe, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, providing general counsel, director of government relations and chief ethics officer services. NLG has also represented clients in the defense industry. Mr. Morello graduated from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. Mr. Morello received his law degree from the University of Detroit Law School. He also earned an MSBA from Boston University and a master's in pastoral studies from Sacred Heart Major Seminary. (stevenjmorello@yahoo.com)

### **Bruce Tiedeman, Alaska Energy Authority**

Bruce is an Aleut from Cordova, AK, in the Chugach region. He is the manager of community relations for the Alaska Energy Authority, and has worked for AEA since 1992. His work provides technical assistance on energy developments throughout the state. Bruce has a varied background in the public and private sectors, both profit and non-profit. In his early years, he was in the commercial fishing and construction industries. Since then he has worked in many capacities, mainly with rural and native populations. He is noted for being a former native teacher and coach at Mt. Edgecumbe High School. He also has served in executive and board capacities in his regional corporation (Chugach) and the Cook Inlet Native Association (now CITC). Bruce holds a bachelor's degree in math and physical education, and master's degree in guidance and counseling in education. He is certified to coach in 6 athletic disciplines. In the past, Mr. Tiedeman also has been a board member of AFN, Chairman of the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission, and president of the Anchorage Native Caucus. (BTiedeman@aidea.org)

### **Dennis E. Witmer, Arctic Energy Technology Development Lab, Univ. of Alaska in Fairbanks**

Professor Witmer is currently the director of the Arctic Energy Technology Development Laboratory (AETDL) at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. The laboratory's mission is to promote research, development and deployment of energy technologies in Arctic regions by bringing together resources from the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) and Alaska's energy industry. After working as a research professor with the UAF Energy Center, Dr. Witmer joined the UAF Mechanical Engineering Department in 1994. Prior to that, he received his doctorate in mechanical engineering from the University of Pennsylvania in 1985. In 1980 he received a bachelor's degree from Millersville University. (ffdew@uaf.edu)