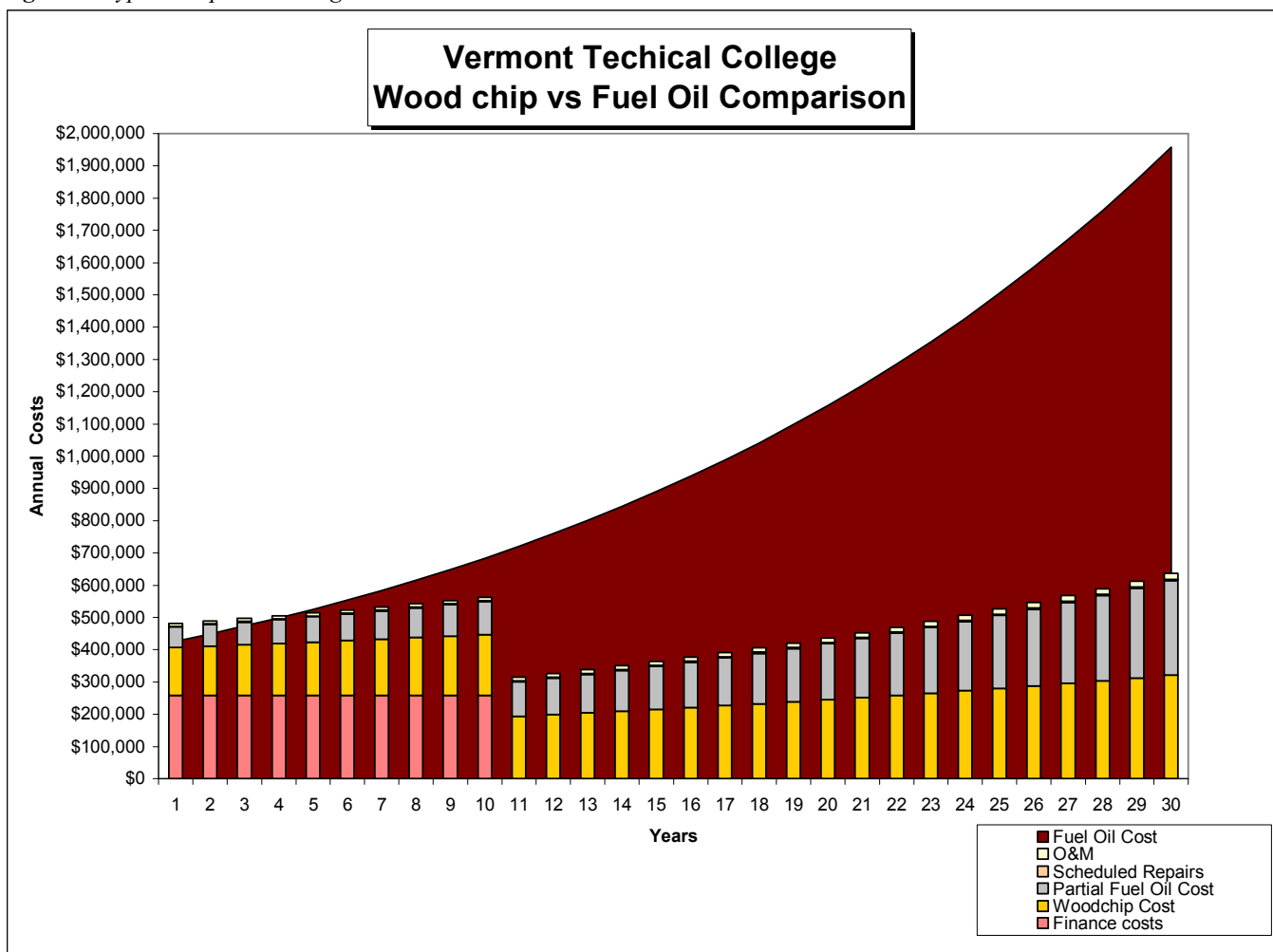


CONFERENCE INTRODUCES USE OF WOOD BIOMASS AS ALTERNATIVE HEATING FUEL FOR NORTH COUNTRY AND ADIRONDACK FACILITIES

On May 13th, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Adirondack Energy Smart Park Initiative (E\$PI) held the **North Country Woody Biomass Conference** at “The Wild Center” in Tupper Lake. Sloane Crawford, project lead, noted that: "A community-based model for biomass utilization has strong potential for application throughout the region."

Woody biomass for heating is a renewable, carbon neutral, and economically appealing source of energy that is locally produced from on-going timber harvests and sawmill/forest products manufacturing operations. See Figure 1: “Typical impact on budget” (Jeff Forward, 2008). As the cost of heating oil rises, interest in this alternative approach is growing, but it is nevertheless not well understood in the Adirondack and North Country regions.

Figure 1 *Typical impact on budget*



Municipal representatives, facility managers, non-profits, small businesses, and many others made up the 127 attendees. Participants enjoyed the overview of information made available through the presentations, and found the natural history museum setting appealing and relevant. The Conference featured expert speakers on biomass boiler technology options, chip and pellet fuel supplies, wood energy and energy conservation, emissions and permitting issues, case studies of facilities currently using biomass heating, and financial assistance. The twenty speakers represented a cross-section of Northeastern

experience with biomass use, primarily from Vermont, where more than 30 community facilities are largely heated with wood, including the State Capital building in Montpelier. The project has hired biomass expert Jeff Forward to conduct the feasibility studies. Jeff Forward is a wood energy specialist and the principal of Richmond Energy Associates, a firm specializing in renewable energy and energy efficiency program design and implementation. The company works with institutional clients like hospitals, colleges and local governments to help them assess the potential for using alternative technologies for their facilities and infrastructure.

The conference was part of a grant-supported program for municipal and institutional facilities in the 14-county North County/Adirondack region that are interested in exploring the feasibility of using locally produced wood to reduce annual heating costs. The program provides matching grants covering 75 percent – up to \$3,000 – of the cost of studies to assess the feasibility of utilizing woody biomass for heat in qualifying facilities. Studies will evaluate costs, savings and site specific engineering issues.

Institutional and municipal facilities can participate in one or more of several activities planned for 2008 that will serve to educate decision makers and others about biomass boiler technology and the potential economic and social benefits that using wood energy can provide. Many facilities in the Northeast have already converted from fossil fuels to biomass heating systems, and are currently realizing these benefits. The purpose of this project is to catalyze the same in New York's North Country. In addition, biomass energy can provide a supplement to "green initiatives" that facilities may be undertaking.

Applications from facilities with an interest in taking advantage of the grant will be accepted through June 15, 2008, and the applications are available on the Energy Smart Park Initiative web site (www.energysmartpark.org). For more information, facilities may contact Sloane Crawford, NYS DEC, 518-402-9415.

The E\$PI Steering Committee includes: The Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, Adirondack Sustainable Communities, Adirondack North Country Association, Community Power Network, Community Energy Services/North Country Energy Smart Communities, and the Building Codes Assistance Project/Alliance to Save Energy.