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University Marketing and Communications

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## Honeywell and EIU Bring the Heat with Biomass-Fueled Plant

Nov-20-2009

*[Note: Honeywell released the following press release in conjunction with the ceremonial groundbreaking held today (Nov. 20, 2009) on the EIU campus in Charleston, Illinois.]*



Proposed EIU Renewable Energy Center

MINNEAPOLIS -- Honeywell today announced a \$79 million renewable energy and building retrofit program with Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Ill. The program, which combines energy-efficient facility upgrades with one of the largest biomass-fueled heating plants on a university campus, will help EIU address deferred maintenance, improve its infrastructure, and save approximately \$140 million in energy and operating costs over the next two decades.

EIU will finance the improvements and use the savings, guaranteed by Honeywell through a 20-year performance contract, to pay for the work. As a result, the program will not place a burden on the university's budget or require additional taxpayer dollars or student fees.

The upgrades will impact all facilities on the 320-acre campus, and significantly curb the university's energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. For example, they will reduce electricity consumption by an estimated 6.2 million

kilowatt-hours per year -- enough energy to power more than 580 homes annually. Carbon dioxide emissions will also decrease by nearly 20,000 metric tons each year. According to figures from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, this is equivalent to removing more than 3,600 cars from the road.

"Like many universities, our list of needs across campus is much larger than the financial resources available," said Bill Perry, president of Eastern Illinois University. "This program allows us to make critical improvements and keep our facilities comfortable and functional for years to come. Plus, we're able to reduce our carbon footprint at the same time. It's an ideal solution for the university and surrounding community."

The focal point of the program is the construction of a new steam plant on the southeast corner of campus that will be driven by two large biomass gasifiers, the first application of this technology in the region. The plant will use wood chips sourced from the local logging industry to generate steam and heat buildings on campus. And it will replace the university's aging steam plant, which is inconveniently located in the center of campus, consumes more than 10,000 tons of coal per year and requires constant maintenance.

Through biomass gasification, the wood chips are heated in an airtight, oxygen-deprived chamber until they break down to create a synthetic gas that burns similar to natural gas. The gas is then used to fire the boilers, giving the university a carbon-neutral solution for heating its facilities. As a result, all of the steam heating load for the university will be met through a renewable resource.

EIU chose the biomass system based on input from the Honeywell Renewable Energy Scorecard, a first-of-its-kind selection tool that analyzes location-specific details to pinpoint the technology with the most significant environmental and economic drivers.

As part of the new plant, Honeywell will also install a small turbine that uses excess steam to produce electricity. The turbine is expected to generate more than 2.9 million kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, reducing the amount of energy the university purchases from the grid and providing another environmentally friendly energy source.

Additional conservation measures include:

- Retrocommissioning all mechanical systems on campus to ensure efficient operation;
- Constructing a new high-voltage switch yard to consolidate two intake points for electricity, which will lower the university's utility rates;
- Updating the chilled water system to provide more flexibility in determining which chillers to use for its cooling needs;
- Replacing windows at five residence halls with double-pane insulating glass;
- Upgrading lighting fixtures and installing occupancy sensors throughout campus to help reduce energy use;
- Retrofitting plumbing systems to conserve water use; and
- Sealing building envelopes to prevent the loss of warm and cool air.

Honeywell will also provide ongoing commissioning, and measurement and verification as part of the contract. The upgrades are expected to be complete by end of 2012.

"Using renewable energy not only delivers environmental benefits, it can also generate economic payback," said Paul Orzeske, president of Honeywell Building Solutions. "Through guaranteed energy savings, organizations like Eastern Illinois University can make investments in their facility infrastructure and reduce carbon dioxide emissions without impacting the bottom line."

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