Wood energy conference hosted in Fairbanks

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The fifth Alaska Wood Energy Conference will take place April 15-17 in Fairbanks. The conference will highlight rural energy and Interior heating concerns, including the sustainable harvesting of wood and air quality issues. Other presentations will focus on woody biomass research, community evaluation of biomass options and new technologies.

Conference sessions will meet April 16-17 at the Westmark Fairbanks Hotel and Convention Center. Participants may take an optional tour April 15 to Superior Pellet Fuels and Wood Brothers Firewood in North Pole.

Conference coordinator Karen Petersen said sessions will be geared to a wide audience, including community officials considering wood heating options, individuals selling biomass products or others who are in the market for them.

Patricia Longley Cochran, the executive director of the Alaska Native Science Commission, will address energy issues in rural villages. Other featured speakers will include Gwen Holdmann, director of the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Alaska Center for Energy and Power, who will talk about the future of Alaska energy; John Crouch of the Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association, who will address managing particulate matter; and Allen Brackley, a research forester with the U.S. Forest Service’s Pacific Northwest Research Station in Sitka, who will cover barriers to biomass project development.

The conference will also include a public open house and trade show from 6 to 8 p.m., April 16, at the hotel. During the open house, half-hour sessions will provide information on using wood stoves efficiently, firewood cutting and understanding PM 2.5, fine particulate matter. Registration is not required for the open house.

Conference co-sponsors include the UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Alaska Energy Authority, the Alaska Center for Energy and Power and the Forest Service. See conference details and registration linked at www.uaf.edu/ces.

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