

UW Receives Additional \$5 Million in Federal Funding to Boost WY-CUSP

Sept. 7, 2010 -- The University of Wyoming today (Tuesday) received \$5 million from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) as part of a nearly \$600 million funding boost to accelerate carbon capture and storage research and development in the United States.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, announced by U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu during an afternoon conference call, represents what he called an "unprecedented" investment in the country's development of clean coal technologies and helps support President Obama's goal of cost-effective deployment of carbon capture and storage (CCS) within 10 years.

The funding allocated to UW will be used for the Wyoming Carbon Underground Storage Project (WY-CUSP), Phase I, a detailed geologic storage site characterization project in Sweetwater County that will benefit future industrial carbon dioxide storage projects by distinguishing regional storage opportunities.

"We are thrilled with this additional funding from the DOE," said Ronald C. Surdam, director of the Carbon Management Institute in the UW School of Energy Resources. "This will allow the existing site characterization project to move from a good project to an exemplary project. The funding will also help compensate for the rising cost of rig rates and allow us to expand the data available to assist in this and additional carbon storage research projects around the state."

The primary goal in the first phase of WY-CUSP is to acquire the technical knowledge required to plan and execute CO₂ storage demonstration on the Rock Springs Uplift, which has been characterized by the Wyoming State Geological Survey as the most promising geological CO₂ storage site in the state.

In December 2009, WY-CUSP, Phase I, received \$4.975 million in federal funding. The project was selected for additional funding because the DOE sees "an opportunity to expand that geological characterization," said James Markowsky, assistant secretary for fossil energy.

Tuesday, UW was among 22 projects in 15 states to receive DOE funding totaling \$575 million. The funded projects represent four areas of CCS: 1) Large scale testing of advanced gasification technologies; 2) advanced turbo-machinery to lower emissions from industrial sources; 3) post-combustion carbon dioxide capture with increased efficiencies and decreased costs; and 4) geologic storage site characterization.

"This is a major step forward in the fight to reduce carbon emissions from industrial plants. These new technologies will not only help fight climate change, they will create jobs now and help position the United States to lead the world in clean coal technologies, which will only increase in demand in the years ahead," Chu said.

He added, "The country that leads the clean energy industry will be the country that leads the global economy."

UW was one of just six universities chosen for funding. The University of Alabama, University of Illinois, University of Kansas, University of Texas at Austin and the University of Utah also received \$5 million for CCS-related projects.