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USDA Report Outlines Renewable Power Opportunities for Rural Communities

WASHINGTON, April 20, 2011—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued a report that identifies and discusses the wide array of renewable power opportunities available to producers in rural America. The report, titled “Renewable Power Opportunities for Rural Communities,” is intended to serve as a summary and guide to assist rural utilities that may be considering investing in a renewable electricity generation projects, as well as for policymakers who may be considering how to encourage such investments.

The report is designed to assist local and state government leaders, rural farmers and business operators, rural-based utilities and their leadership, and rural residents whose interests are focused on renewable power, distributed generation, and rural economic development. The report discusses a rural utility’s opportunities for investing in renewable electricity generation capacity.

Utility staff can use the report to learn about transmission access for renewable electrical power, system regulation, transmission expansion paths for renewable energy including modernization and a smart grid, future electricity demand, electric utility business models, and developing/financing strategies of renewable energy. In addition, a large number of renewable electric power developments in rural America are highlighted.

The report was prepared under the direction of USDA’s Office of Energy Policy and New Uses (OEPNU) and the Office of the Chief Economist, and produced under a cooperative agreement with the State Utility Forecasting Group at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind. Principal authors of the report were Samuel V. Brown, David G. Nderitu, Paul V. Preckel (Principal Investigator), Douglas J. Gotham (Co-Principal Investigator), and Benjamin W. Allen.

A complete copy of the report can be accessed at www.usda.gov/oce/reports/energy/index.htm. Marvin Duncan, a Senior Economist in OEPNU, is the primary USDA contact for the report. He can be reached at (202) 401-0532 or by e-mail at mduncan@oce.usda.gov.

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