DOE reports surge in applications for clean coal tax credits

A pair of tax credit programs created by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 designed to promote the construction of advanced clean coal and gasification projects, and better utilize domestic energy resources, has garnered a massive response from the coal community, according to data released this week by the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Office of Fossil Fuels. A total of 49 tax credit applications have been submitted to DOE to help support the construction of numerous clean coal and gasification projects, DOE said.

In an Aug. 14 release, DOE said the 49 applications seek a total of $5 billion in tax credits from one of the two programs. Taken together, the applications cover $57 billion in proposed clean coal and gasification projects.

“The number and range of proposed projects demonstrates industry’s willingness to embrace tomorrow’s technologies today,” said Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy Jeffrey Jarrett in the Aug. 14 release. “The combination of government incentives and private-sector innovation will harness America’s technological strength to ensure secure, affordable, and reliable energy,” Jarrett said.

Of the 49 applications submitted, 22 were filed under the coal-based program and seek $2.3 billion in tax credits to support $27.7 billion in proposed projects in 19 states. Eighteen of these applications are for integrated gasification combined cycle
Administration announces second round of cooperative conservation listening sessions

The Bush Administration last week announced the dates and locations for a second round of listening sessions meant to solicit public feedback on how the administration can best use cooperative conservation programs to achieve improved environmental progress. President Bush has made the increased and effective use of such programs one of the hallmarks of his administration’s environmental agenda.

On Aug. 8, the secretaries of the Agriculture, Commerce and Interior Departments, along with the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, announced the details for the second round of sessions, which will consist of seven meetings beginning Aug. 24 in Omaha, Neb. These sessions follow eight previously announced sessions that began earlier this month, with the administration likely to schedule at least a dozen more sessions.

Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne is schedule to participate in an Aug. 28 session in Fairbanks, Alaska, as well as the final second round session, scheduled for Sept. 28 in Colton, Calif. Senior officials from the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior are slated to participate in the other five second round meetings.

One of the administration’s primary cooperative conservation initiatives centers on an effort to win congressional approval for “Good Samaritan” legislation to remove current liability barriers that discourage voluntary efforts to clean-up abandoned hardrock mines. Discussion topics for the sessions will include wildlife habitat and species protection, cooperation among government agencies, improving science, strengthening government-private sector cooperation, and addressing the concerns of landowners.

“NMA greatly appreciates the administration’s efforts to seek public input on cooperative conservation programs, and NMA members are strongly encouraged to participate in these sessions, particularly to underline the need to quickly enact ‘Good Samaritan’ legislation,” said NMA President and CEO Kraig R. Naasz. “Members are also encouraged to discuss their concerns regarding the Endangered Species Act or actions by the Fish and Wildlife Service,” said Naasz.

Full details on the latest round of listening sessions is available at: www.doi.gov/news/06_News_Releases/060808.htm.

Additional information on the sessions can be found at: http://cooperativeconservation.gov/sessions/index.html.

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DOE’s National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL), in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), will evaluate the project proposals for technical and economic feasibility and to ensure consistency with energy policy goals. Once that review is complete, successful projects will be certified and recommended to the IRS, which will then make a final decision on which projects will receive a tax credit. DOE said the IRS expects to make final selections by November 30.

“The overwhelming response to these programs is a clear sign of the enormous interest that exists in using the latest, most efficient and cleanest technology to ensure that our nation’s unmatched coal reserves play a major role in helping to meet America’s ever growing energy needs,” said NMA President and CEO Kraig R. Naasz. “When President Bush signed the Energy Policy Act into law he said the act would allow America to use its domestic energy resources more cleanly and more productively. Based on the evidence so far, it looks as though the president got it right.”


NMA tours Emerald Mine

NMA President and CEO Kraig R. Naasz (front row, second from right) this week toured Foundation Coal Corporation’s Emerald Mine located in Waynesburg, Pa. Joining Naasz on the tour were NMA Vice President of External Communications Luke Popovich (back row, center), NMA Director of Grassroots and Constituent Relations Brian Kelley (back row, first from right) and NMA Director of Internal Communications Corey Henry (not pictured). Also joining the Aug. 15 tour was Sebrena Sawtell, assistant vice president of Widmeyer Communications’ Consortium for Risk and Crisis Communication. NMA staff were treated to a thorough and comprehensive tour of the Emerald Mine, as well as an in-depth presentation on the mine’s impressive production and safety record. NMA extends special thanks to Pennsylvania Services Corporation President Mike Mishra (front row, first from left) and all of the Foundation and Emerald Mine staff that helped organize the tour.
2006 Bluefield Coal Symposium set for September

The 2006 Bluefield Coal Symposium, scheduled for Sept. 27-29 in Bluefield, W.Va., will feature an in-depth examination of a range of issues critical to the coal mining community, including the unveiling of a comprehensive mine safety report prepared by an independent panel of experts and an update on a host of federal and state legislative and regulatory issues. The symposium will also feature speeches by leading industry representatives and public officials, including a Sept. 29 dinner address by West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin (D).

The symposium will open on Sept. 27 with a keynote address from Massey Energy Chairman, President and CEO Don L. Blankenship. On Sept. 28, Dr. R. Larry Grayson, chair of the independent Mine Safety Technology and Training Commission established by NMA will present the commission’s final report.

The report’s comprehensive recommendations for strengthening mine safety will cover four categories and will be explained by the chairpersons of four subcommittees established by the commission. The commission was formed earlier this year following tragic accidents in the coal fields of Appalachia to examine how new and existing technologies and emergency and training procedures can be crafted to meet the unique conditions of underground coal mines.

On Sept. 29, NMA Senior Vice President of Government and Political Affairs Dan Gerkin will give a detailed presentation focused on the latest developments in Washington, D.C., regarding numerous mining-related legislative and regulatory issues. Also on Sept. 29, representatives from state coal associations in Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia will detail a variety of important state-level issues.

As always, the show will demonstrate the latest technological innovations in use by the industry and will serve as a focal point for demonstrating the vital, and ever-increasing role coal plays in helping to meet America’s ever-growing energy needs.

More information, including registration materials, is available at: www.bluefieldchamber.com/Coal%20Symposium%20brochure.pdf.

Indiana governor launches energy plan focused on clean coal

Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels (R) last week unveiled a comprehensive energy plan designed to lessen his state’s dependency on imported natural gas and oil by increasing the use of Indiana coal and deploying clean coal technologies. The “Hoosier Homegrown” energy plan, unveiled on Aug. 11, is aimed at producing electricity and transportation fuels in Indiana using the state’s large coal reserves.

In an Aug. 11 announcement, Daniels warned that Indiana’s low energy rates are at risk because the state will shortly become a net electricity importer. He warned that Indiana’s “economic comeback” depends on the development of the state’s energy potential. “Our energy industry must grow. With new forms of energy production, such as biodiesel, ethanol and clean coal, we will preserve and grow jobs and incomes,” Daniels said.

The plan calls for the construction of new coal-fueled power plants that utilize clean coal technologies and advocates producing synthetic gas from Indiana coal, rather than importing natural gas.

The governor’s Aug. 11 announcement noted that 75 percent of Indiana’s current energy expenditures are used to purchase imported energy. Ninety percent of the state’s electricity is generated using coal, but 50 percent of the coal used to generate that electricity is produced outside Indiana. Daniels’ plan aims to better use Indiana’s 17 billion tons of coal reserves through the construction of new generation coal-fueled plants that can more productively and cleanly use Indiana’s vast coal reserves.

To help steer implementation of the plan, Daniels signed an executive order creating the Interagency Council on Energy. The council will be chaired by Indiana’s Office of Energy and Defense Development and will include the chair of the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission and Indiana’s Utility Consumer Counselor, as well as senior officials from seven departments and agencies.

A complete copy of the plan is available at: www.energy.in.gov.

Pete Dye classic tees off next week; Golf Channel to air all four rounds

The first round of the Nationwide Tour’s National Mining Association Pete Dye Classic tees off at the Pete Dye Golf Club in Bridgeport, W.Va., on Aug. 24. Live coverage of all four rounds of the tournament begins on The Golf Channel at 1:30 p.m. Eastern time, starting with the first round and ending with the final round on Aug. 27.
Newsbits

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich (D) last week announced that the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity will provide $730,000 in grants to help the two Illinois sites vying to become the permanent home of the FutureGen project. In July, Tuscola and Mattoon counties were picked along with Jewett, Texas, and Odessa, Texas, as the final four candidate sites to house the project. When operational, the project will be the world's first near-zero emissions coal-fueled power plant. The grant money is meant to help the two Illinois sites cover costs associated with an Environmental Impact Statement that must be prepared for each site. The latest state funds come on top of some

$80 million Blagojevich has pledged to help lure the FutureGen project to Illinois... Emil Romagnoli, formerly of ASARCO and a long time mining industry consultant, passed away last week. Through his service to the mining industry Emil made many friends and he will be deeply missed by all those fortunate enough to have known him.

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Source: NMA Weekly Statistical Summary/Platts Metals Week