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For Immediate Release

**January 5, 2010—Greenville, SC—Biomass Focus of Request for Pre-proposals**

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (the Endowment) today announced its first Request for Pre-proposals (RFP) for 2010. “Our early work in the area of woody biomass suggests that there are at least two near-term areas within the wood-to-energy value chain where the Endowment might be able to provide further service,” said Endowment President Carlton Owen. “This RFP seeks concepts to rapidly move promising local-scale wood-to-energy conversion technologies from lab to demonstration and a separate work track that would identify and test new models for wood procurement for energy that would also serve to further retention of working forests.”

This RFP constitutes the Endowment’s fourth investment in the woody biomass arena. In addition to a review of forest business clustering that included the concept of waste-to-product, the Endowment and some of its partners are nearing completion of the continent’s most comprehensive data source on woody biomass using facilities at industrial- and community-scales as well as a state-of-the-technology report.

About three percent of North American energy production comes from woody biomass and most of that is produced by traditional forest products companies – lumber and pulp & paper mills -- for their own use. While there are legitimate concerns about expanded wood-to-energy use on forest sustainability and competitive threats to traditional forest products markets, there are many areas of the country where small-diameter, low-value, dead and dying wood far exceeds any current market demand. Without robust markets for these lower-value products, many landowners are left with few economically viable options to manage their forests while threats to overall health of the forest from disease, fire, and insects increase.

Owen noted that there are few areas that cut as broadly across the Endowment’s entire “theory of change” as does the potential of distributed, appropriately-scaled wood-to-energy conversion. “If done correctly it can enhance the competitive position of traditional forest industry, expand domestic production of a needed carbon-neutral energy product, provide additional sources of income for forest landowners, and increase options for proper management and retention of healthy working forests,” says Owen. “That’s not just a win-win but a win-win-win-win.”

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**For more information contact:**

Carlton Owen, President & CEO, U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities  
864-233-7646, [carlton@usendowment.org](mailto:carlton@usendowment.org)

**The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities** (the Endowment) is a not-for-profit public charity working collaboratively with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative and sustainable change for the health and vitality of the nation's working forests and forest-reliant communities [www.usendowment.org](http://www.usendowment.org) .