



SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA  
FOUNDATION

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Southwest Minnesota's Renewable Energy Industry on Display at BIO 2006**

(Hutchinson, MN) – Southwest Minnesota's renewable energy industry was on display April 9-12 at the Biotechnology Industry Organization's (BIO) annual international convention in Chicago.

The Southwest Minnesota Foundation (SWMF) hosted a Renewable Energy Marketplace™ exhibit as part of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's "Positively Minnesota" pavilion. The exhibit featured information about the region's growing wind, biofuels, and biomass industries.

The Renewable Energy Marketplace™ group held a news conference at the event titled, "Meet the Architects Behind Minnesota's Renewable Energy Miracle." Agriculture Commissioner Gene Hugoson gave an overview of Minnesota's leadership in the development of renewable energy and biofuels citing Governor Pawlenty's recent conversations with Ford Motor Company to promote flexible fuel vehicles and the use of biofuels. SWMF vice president, David Paskach, talked about the growing renewable energy industry in southwest Minnesota and the foundation's efforts to market the region as the Renewable Energy Marketplace™ – a thriving renewable energy commerce center. Sue Pirsig, executive director of the Swift County Regional Development Association, shared how the community of Benson is transforming as more renewable energy-related businesses are emerging in her community.

BIO 2006 represented a unique opportunity to showcase the region's energy and agricultural assets, as well as its growing bioscience industry, to an international audience of over 19,000 people from 35 countries and 42 states. Nine people attended the event to showcase southwest Minnesota, including:

David Paskach, Vice President, Southwest Minnesota Foundation  
Sarah Libbon, Communications Officer, Southwest Minnesota Foundation  
Julie Rath, Economic Development Specialist, Redwood Area Development Corporation  
Sue Pirsig, Executive Director, Swift County Regional Development Association  
Steve Renquist, Executive Director, Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar Economic  
Development Commission  
Glen Thuringer, Manager, Worthington Regional Economic Development Corporation  
Jan Lundebrek, President, First Security State Bank – Benson, and Chippewa Valley  
Ethanol Company board member  
Christopher Huisinga, Life-Science Innovations and MinnWest Technology Campus  
Andy Butler, Vice President, Home Farms Technologies, Inc.

Several businesses were featured at the Renewable Energy Marketplace™ display, including Home Farms Technologies, which plans to install a gasification system at a new facility in Redwood Falls that will convert 475 tons of solid municipal waste every day into a clean-burning synthetic gas. The gas will replace natural gas now used to produce the steam for operating the Central Bi-Products plant.

Chippewa Valley Ethanol Company of Benson was also spotlighted as a leading producer of ethanol. CVEC not only produces 45 million gallons a year of ethanol, but they are also planning to use biomass energy – burning corn stalks and husks – to replace their use of natural gas. CVEC is also creating new products like Shakers Vodka, distilled from wheat and rye onsite at the ethanol plant. The premium vodka was featured at a reception hosted by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development at BIO 2006. CVEC's neighbor, FibroMinn, was also highlighted as a significant biomass project that will use poultry litter and other forms of biomass to produce 50 megawatts of electricity – enough to supply 50,000 homes with power.

Chris Huisinga and Steve Renquist of Willmar shared information about the MinnWest Technology Campus, which opened this year and already has tenants innovating in the fields of robotics, process flow manufacturing and vaccine research and development and production.

The exhibit also offered an opportunity to showcase “green” products, such as shirts, cups, and other plastic-like products made from corn-based polylactic acid. Candy-coated soynuts were also a hit with conference attendees.

***THE SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA FOUNDATION*** is a regional community foundation dedicated to advancing southwest Minnesota through leadership, relationship-building, program development and philanthropy. The Foundation has contributed over \$40 million to date through its grant and loan programs in southwest Minnesota. To learn more about the foundation, visit [www.swmnfoundation.org](http://www.swmnfoundation.org) on the World Wide Web.

***THE RENEWABLE ENERGY MARKETPLACE™*** is a marketing strategy created by the Southwest Minnesota Foundation to promote the 18-county region as the commerce center to invest, build, sell and distribute renewable energy products. The 18-county area is rich with

*natural resources, value-added agricultural industries, intellectual and local capital, education and non-profit support, and political support – all of the requirements to make southwest Minnesota a thriving marketplace for renewable energy.*

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