

UW project receives funding for carbon center

By JEFF GEARINO Casper Star-Tribune | Posted: Monday, August 31, 2009 12:30 am |

GREEN RIVER - University of Wyoming scientists will continue their pioneering efforts to help create an underground carbon dioxide storage industry in Wyoming under a new federal grant approved late last week.

The university will receive nearly \$1 million to develop a regional carbon sequestration technology training center in Laramie, according to federal officials.

The UW project will help produce the work force necessary to run the state's burgeoning underground CO2 storage industry, officials said.

Going green

Wyoming's project is part of the U.S. Department of Energy's attempts to make coal energy greener and to help keep the state's coal industry viable by reducing CO2 in the atmosphere.

DOE Secretary Steven Chu said Thursday that more than \$8.4 million in funding was recently approved for seven sequestration technology projects across the country.

Together, the projects aim to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technologies that are required for site development, operations and the monitoring of commercial carbon capture and storage projects.

Wyoming will receive \$994,000 to fund a three-year project to develop the Wyoming Carbon Capture Sequestration Technology Institute that will be based in Laramie.

The project work will be managed by the DOE's Office of Fossil Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory.

Greenhouse gas emissions including CO2 have been linked to increasing global temperatures. The issue is of huge importance to the Wyoming economy, given its heavy reliance on carbon-based industries.

Reducing CO2

Carbon capture and sequestration systems aim to reduce the amount of CO2 emitted by coal-fueled power stations to almost zero. The process extracts the carbon dioxide and stores it underground in depleted oil and gas reservoirs, or saline aquifers.

The proposed UW CCS Technology Institute will utilize an industrywide model to train a professional work force and to provide pathways for graduates and professional from related fields in Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region, DOE officials said.

Wyoming is already on the forefront of national carbon sequestration efforts.

Last year, Gov. Dave Freudenthal signed into law two measures that resolved ownership and regulation issues critical to the state's efforts to lead the way in carbon sequestration technologies.

State officials contend the rewards for a viable CO2 sequestration system in Wyoming could be enormous.

In addition to helping secure the state's coal resources, it could spawn a new industry that would require skilled workers including drillers, pipe fitters and welders, roughly the same jobs needed in the natural gas industry.

