

Office of the Hardin County Judge/Executive
JUDGE HARRY L. BERRY

Press Release

September 23rd, 2009



Contact:

The Honorable Harry L. Berry
Hardin County Judge/Executive
(270) 765-2350

For Immediate Release

Hardin County is awarded \$426,500 U.S. Department of Energy (DoE) Grant!

Judge Berry announced today Hardin County Government has been approved for a \$426,500 “Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant”!

After months of collaborative efforts in preparing the County’s application, documenting the benefits of the proposed projects, and answering numerous questions for DoE, Judge Berry is elated with the approval of Hardin County to receive a portion of the \$3.2 Billion allocated within the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for funding local energy efficiency improvements.

This past April Judge Berry, County Engineer Vicki Bracket, Deputy Judge/Executive Jim Roberts, and Consulting Engineer Roger Blair of Tetra Tech began what became a five month process of researching, developing, applying, and tracking the approval of this grant.

The county's ongoing methane gas collection system project at the county owned Pearl Hollow Landfill is slated to receive an estimated 85% of the county's grant funding to expand and improve the gas collection system. Judge Berry plans to direct approximately \$350,000 of the grant to fund over 2,000 feet of new main vacuum header line, multiple gas extraction wells, and supporting pumps, laterals, and pneumatic lines. These improvements and expansion of the system will allow the county to nearly double its current collection rate of methane gas.

Judge Berry explained that in 2005 Hardin County Government partnered with Nolin RECC and East Kentucky Power (EKP) to utilize the greenhouse gas created by the natural decomposition of waste within landfill to produce green electricity. This system recycles the captured methane gas extracted from the landfill to power large commercial generators operated by EKP to supply sufficient electricity to power approximately 1,500 homes in Hardin County.

With much of the preliminary planning for the project completed, Roger Blair estimated it would take six to nine months to complete the engineering and construction phases for the expansion and upgrades. Once completed, the output of the new methane wells, when combined with the existing system, is expected to supply sufficient electricity to power approximately 3,000 homes in the county.

The total reduction in emissions by both the new and existing methane gas system's collection and conversion to electricity is equivalent to any one of the following environmental benefits:

- Removing the annual greenhouse gas emissions from 39,747 passenger vehicles;
- Carbon sequestered annually by 49,322 acres of pine or fir forests;
- Eliminating CO₂ emissions from burning 1133 railcars worth of coal; or
- Preventing CO₂ emissions from 24.6 million gallons of gasoline consumed.

Vicki Brackett explained that methane gas is a by-product of the decomposition of municipal solid waste. It is a greenhouse gas which is nearly 20 times as potent as CO₂ in its negative effects on the environment. Methane is recognized as a renewable energy source that is generated 24/7. Converting methane gas to green power provides environmental benefits by off-setting the use of non-renewable resources such as coal, oil, and gas as well as reducing the emission of SO₂, Nitrogen oxides, particulate matter and CO₂. Landfills are the second largest human-made source of methane in the United States, accounting for 22.7 percent generated in 2007. Between 1990 and 2007 methane gas emissions have decreased five percent.

Judge Berry also stated the remainder of Hardin County's grant will be used to improve the energy efficiency of heating and cooling systems in the H.B. Fife Courthouse. The current systems are outdated and require a great deal of effort to maintain in proper working order.

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