

Future Fund Vignettes: Building Skills for the Green Economy

“Future Fund Recipients to Build Ontario’s Green Economy”



From Left: Minister of Tourism and Culture, the Hon. Michael Chan; Sherri Simzer, Executive Director, Employment and Education Centre; Pauline Rochefort, Biomass Network Group; Lyle Shipley, Executive Director, Greater Toronto Chapter of the Canada Green Building Council; Brent Kopperson, Executive Director, Windfall Ecology Centre; OTF Chair Helen Burstyn; Nalini Stewart, Chair, OTF Future Fund Committee; Minister of Environment, the Hon. John Gerretsen

Biomass Network Group c/o Biomass Innovation Centre at Nipissing University:

The efforts of the Biomass Network Group will help to set the stage for the development of the biofuels and biomaterials industry within Ontario's forest and agricultural sectors and help fuel the economic growth of Northern Ontario through clean technologies.

The Biomass Network Group seeks to help Northern Ontario communities diversify their economies by using a local resource - primarily wood chips and pelletized wood - as a biomass with which to produce a clean, affordable, renewable, carbon-friendly fuel for heating and energy. A consortium of trade, commerce, education, and heating/energy businesses and organizations, municipalities and institutions, the Group is collaborating with the Biomass Innovation Centre at Nipissing University in North Bay to put in place the training infrastructure needed to grow the workforce for biofuel and biomaterial technologies.

OTF provided \$565,000 to see new skills and educational programs developed on biomass, including courses in mechanical and civil engineering, a new course on biofuels/ biomaterials for steamfitters in the Ontario Apprenticeship Program, and the establishment of a new certificate program for biofuels/biomaterial harvester workers. The courses and training programs will be developed and delivered in partnership with Lakehead and Laurentian Universities. The funding will also provide training and skills development needed by members of Nipissing First Nation to operate a new wood pellet mill. Once completed, the full initiative has the potential to create more than 200 new jobs, 768 indirect new jobs, and 180 improved jobs annually.