

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Geological Survey provides science for successful FutureGen bid

URBANA, Ill.— University of Illinois leaders hailed the announcement that Mattoon had been chosen as the site for the \$1.7 billion FutureGen clean-coal plant.

Gov. Rod Blagojevich, members of the FutureGen for Illinois Taskforce, State Geological Survey scientists, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and elected officials, university leaders and local residents celebrated in Mattoon.

Mattoon's being chosen as the site was announced at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., today (Tuesday, Dec. 18).

The Mattoon site won out over two Texas sites as well as Tuscola, Ill., on the basis of geology, infrastructure, research facilities and community and state support.

The FutureGen Alliance plant will produce electricity by burning gasified coal. Excess carbon dioxide will be converted into a fluid and injected into deep underground geological reservoirs using a method called geological carbon sequestration.

This is a promising method of isolating carbon dioxide, a major contributor to global warming, from the earth's atmosphere. Mattoon was the only one of the four proposals to offer on-site carbon sequestration.

Scientists at the State Geological Survey, which is part of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, assessed the Illinois Basin as one of the best sites for large-scale, long-term storage of carbon dioxide. The FutureGen plant will also store carbon dioxide in a major saline reservoir, the Mt. Simon Sandstone, more than a mile below the surface.

The decision to build FutureGen in Illinois affirms what our scientists have been telling us for several years now," said William Shilts, State Geologist and chief, Illinois State Geological Survey. "Our research shows the geology of Illinois to be ideal for safely sequestering carbon dioxide.

“This decision by the FutureGen Alliance for the U.S. Department of Energy validates the research we have done and will help Illinois limit greenhouse gas emissions and thus address climate change in an effective way.”

Robert J. Finley, director of the Energy and Earth Resources Center at the Illinois State Geological Survey, formerly worked in Texas and said the Illinois geology was better suited for FutureGen.

“We know how to inject the carbon dioxide into the underground reservoirs,” Finley said. “Our initial analysis indicates the Mount Simon reservoir is well-adapted for the carbon sequestration part of the project.”

University of Illinois President B. Joseph White said FutureGen demonstrates how government, industry and public research universities can work together to address pressing energy, environmental and societal needs

In addition to generating electricity, FutureGen will also serve as a demonstration site that will gasify coal from all over the world and analyze the environmental impact,” White said. “The University of Illinois’ Urbana campus, in addition to being the State Geological Survey’s home, has world-class scientists and engineers who will provide their expertise to the survey and FutureGen.”

University of Illinois Board of Trustees Chairman Lawrence C. Eppley said the project will foster economic development for the state’s communities and citizens.

“The FutureGen plant will bolster the economy of central Illinois and have ripple effects throughout the state,” Eppley said. “The U of I will be an important asset in building upon FutureGen’s success and prestige to take a leadership position in the development of the clean energy sources of the future.”

The FutureGen Alliance Plant will cost more than \$1.7 billion to build. Funding is coming from federal, state and local government plus \$400 million from coal companies. The Mattoon plant will be built on 444 acres of land one mile northwest of the city.

The first-of-its-kind plant, which entailed four years of planning, is designed to be the cleanest fossil-fuel electricity-generating plant in the world working at a near-zero level of emissions. It will serve as the prototype for the next generation of clean electricity coal-burning plants.

According to a Southern Illinois University study, the FutureGen plant will initially create 1,300 construction and 150 permanent jobs, generate more than \$1 billion in state economic impact and 1,225 spin-off jobs. Construction will begin in 2010, and it will be fully operating in 2013.

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The University of Illinois is a world leader in research and discovery, the largest educational institution in the state with nearly 70,000 students, 24,000 faculty and staff, and campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield. The U of I awards 17,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees annually.

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