

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor unveils ‘Wood Warms’ firewood program

MONTPELIER – Governor Jim Douglas today unveiled “Wood Warms,” a new multi-year initiative of his Fuel and Food Partnership, to help harvest firewood for Vermonters who heat their homes with wood.

Wood Warms builds upon the successful 1970s state firewood program when Vermonters took to the forests and harvested their own firewood. But the new program takes it one step better by working with the forest products industry, community action programs and fellow Vermonters to bring firewood to convenient locations throughout the state.

Some wood cut this year will be ready for use this winter, but Wood Warms will fully take off in future years as more and more seasoned firewood becomes available.

“Helping Vermonters get through this winter is the first priority and eliminating our dependence on foreign oil is going to require a wide variety of innovative solutions,” said Governor Douglas. “The Wood Warms program is a crucial first step toward a more affordable, economically stable and renewable energy future for Vermonters.”

Under the direction of the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Wood Warms is designed to be flexible to accommodate Vermonters’ needs and the realities of wood harvesting, said Commissioner Jonathan Wood.

“Loggers have to deal with the weather; that’s a fact of life,” said Wood. “But I have been overwhelmed by the ingenuity and can-do call to action that my staff and the folks in the forest products industry have already shown to help their fellow Vermonters.”

Wood said the Department is coordinating program implementation with the Agency of Transportation and the Agency of Human Services. VTrans will make available some of its regional garage locations for seasoning and storing the firewood for pickup. Meanwhile, the Agency of Human Services will coordinate with community action programs, other nonprofits and volunteers to get the firewood to the elderly and low- and moderate-income Vermonters.

Forests cover 76 percent of Vermont, of which 15 percent is publicly owned by federal, state or municipal governments. The rest is privately owned. Responsible harvesting and

management of Vermont's forests is the No. 1 reason why Vermont is the greenest state in the nation, according to Forbes magazine.

Prudent stewardship is the key to Vermont's economic and environmental livelihood, said Governor Douglas. "We have always worked and respected the land in Vermont. It is why we nurture our natural resources so that our prosperity is here today as well as for future Vermonters."

How Wood Warms works:

Wood Warms is a number of initiatives that will supply inexpensive firewood to Vermonters for the foreseeable future. Of which:

Roadside firewood lots: Homeowners will call FPR District Offices to sign up for available roadside lots where they can harvest and haul their own firewood for as little as \$10 per cord. One lot should produce 5 cords. The signup period begins August 1, 2008. Lots are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The state is working to provide a number of lots in all forestry districts of the state. For more information, contact:

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| St. Johnsbury: | 751-0123 |
| Barre: | 476-0170 |
| Essex: | 879-6565 |
| Springfield: | 885-8855 |
| Rutland: | 786-3851 |

Firewood distribution yards: Firewood yards are being staged at regional VTrans garages throughout the state. Qualifying Vermonters can sign up with the statewide coordinator for an allotment of wood. The yards will be open on weekends and evenings, starting September 2.

The following VTrans garages are designated Wood Warms firewood yards: The Fort in Colchester; Lyndon or West Danville; Springfield Airport; Mendon Traffic Stop; Morrisville Garage and Williamstown Garage.

Cooperating nonprofits and volunteer organizations will assist qualifying Vermonters in signup and distribution. The Wood Warms coordinator can be reached at: 802-241-3713.

"As part of the Governor's 'Fuel and Food Partnership' we wanted to develop a project that made firewood available to lower-income families who are not eligible for the state's fuel assistance program," said Commissioner Wood. "Working with community action agencies to qualify folks for firewood within certain income levels was a logical community connection," Wood added.

The following community action agencies are partners in Wood Warms. Interested Vermonters should call their local CAP starting on August 18 to learn more about eligibility requirements and participation details:

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| Bennington-Rutland Opportunity Council | 1-800-717-BROC |
| Central Vermont Community Action Council | 1-800-639-1053 |
| Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity | 1-800-287-7971 |
| Northeast Kingdom Community Action | 1-800-639-4065 |
| Southeastern Vermont Community Action | 1-800-464-9951 |

How much wood will be available for this winter is dependent on weather conditions and location of the yard. As forest industry professionals gear up for the prime logging season over the winter, much more seasoned firewood will be available for future heating seasons beginning in 2009.

For more information, please visit <http://www.vtfpr.org/> or call the statewide coordinator at: 802-241-3713.