

# Dane County Receives Six Proposals to Construct First-of-its-Kind “Cow Power” Facility

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Dane County has received six bids to build the Dane County Cow-Power Project – a renewable energy producing manure digester to help Waunakee-area farmers better manage their waste and to help clean area lakes and streams.

“I am excited to see the magnificent response to build our Cow-Power Project that means green energy, green jobs and cleaner lakes for our citizens to enjoy,” Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk said. “By focusing our efforts to reduce algae-producing phosphorus, creating green electricity and safeguarding water quality, we are taking significant steps toward ensuring the future of family dairies and lakes in Dane County.”

It’s estimated the new facility will produce nearly \$1-million of “green electricity” every year; enough energy to power around 1,000 homes in Dane County. Building the digester will create about 25 good-paying, green construction jobs while additional positions will be created to operate it.

In order to make the project shovel-ready by this fall, Dane County has broken the bidding and design of the project into two main parts. The first part addressed by the bids received recently involves the major equipment and components of the manure digester, the solid separation and phosphorus removal system, and the electric generation system. The second part to be bid later this summer, involves the design and construction of the rest of the facility, including site work, access roads, buildings, utilities, and pumps and piping to move manure to and from the farms.

Four of the bids received were from Wisconsin companies. The six proposals detail different ownership and operating models for the county to consider. All of the proposals will be analyzed and several companies will be interviewed before a selection is made.

In addition to the \$1-million Falk put into the 2009 county budget for construction, the State Building Commission has approved Governor Doyle's request of \$6.6 million in his capital budget to help fund two Dane County digester projects. The county and state are also seeking federal stimulus funding in combination with private investment.

Falk noted there are 400 dairy farms in Dane County with about 50,000 dairy cows. The county's dairy industry is valued at \$700-million and responsible for 4,000 jobs. Those cows produce an estimated two-billion pounds of manure each year but using digester technology can remove up to 85% of the algae-producing phosphorus.

