

NEWS From GEORGIA TECH'S ENGINEERING EXPERIMENT STATION

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SYNTHETIC FUELS TO BE SHOWN
TO JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

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For Immediate Release

A joint committee of the Georgia House and Senate studying energy resources will see synthetic fuels in action at the dedication of the Biomass Research Facility at Georgia Tech Thursday morning (July 12) at 11:30.

The committee, chaired by Representative Nathan Knight of Newnan, was appointed by Lt. Governor Zell Miller and House Speaker Tom Murphy to study Georgia's energy situation and recommend appropriate legislation to try to prevent a crisis in Georgia. Knight said, "So far, Georgia has done well in the present gasoline shortage, but the fact that this state has to import 97% of its energy makes it very important for us to develop our own energy resources."

The committee has determined that Georgia's largest reservoirs of untapped energy are the sun and biomass such as wood, grains, and grasses. The Biomass Research Facility on the Tech Campus will test ways to use waste woods and crop residues to make ethanol and methanol (gasohol), and to make methane gas, char-oil, and fuel to generate electricity.

Dr. Thomas E. Stelson, Vice President of Research for Georgia Tech will host the joint legislative committee at the dedication at the research facility. Wood pellets and wood chips will be burned in a wood gasifier which, in turn, will burn the ribbon to formally open the facility. A mixture of ethanol will be poured into the gas tank of a van to provide its start-and-go power. Char-oil, made from wood pyrolysis will be ignited. And the Wood Research Mobile Vans of the Georgia Forestry Commission will be on hand for demonstration and displays of wood stoves and furnaces.

In addition, the legislators will inspect several solar facilities on the Tech campus, including a solar thermal test facility (power tower) agricultural dryers and a wind generator.

Dr. Stelson recently attended a White House ceremony where President Jimmy Carter announced a national goal of having alternate energy provide 20% of the nation's energy needs by the year 2000. Dr. Stelson said "Georgia is able to produce 10-25% of its own energy from biomass and solar energy. Wood is now selling for less than petroleum fuels, and a greater use of Georgia's own energy resources should produce more than one billion dollars worth of economic activity."

The legislative committee is working closely with Mark Zwecker, Director of the State Energy Office for Governor George Busby. Zwecker has participated in two previous meetings of the committee, the first at the annual meeting of the International Solar Energy Society at the World Congress Center in June, and later in a tour of the solar and energy conservation facilities at the community of Shennandoah, 25 miles south of Atlanta.

Committee members are; Senators Parks Brown of Hartwell, chairman of the Senate delegation, Terrell Starr of Forest Park, John Foster of Cornelia, Glenn Bryant of Hinesville, and James Tysinger of Atlanta.

Representatives include Committee Chairman Knight of Newnan, G.D. Adams of Atlanta, Paul Bolster of Atlanta, Johnny Isakson of Marietta, and Gerald Johnson of Carrollton.

Note to editors: The Biomass Research Facility is on the northeast corner of Atlantic and Ferst Drives (5th Street) on the Tech campus.