

LOCAL OCTOBER 7, 2016 2:35 PM

Progress made on biomass plant



North Fork Community Power (NFCP) and Yosemite/Sequoia RC&D Council will host a groundbreaking ceremony for the NFCP Bioenergy Facility, Nov. 3, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., at the Old Mill Site (34000 Koso Nobe Road).

The event will kick off with statements from government leaders and key project partners followed by a brief tour of the project location. Immediately following will be light refreshments as well as an opportunity for questions and answers with the project team.

The NFCP, a public/private partnership between North Fork Community Development Council and Phoenix Energy, has been working for the last two years on financing to complete the construction of the small-scale forest bioenergy facility at a retired sawmill site in North Fork. The power plant will provide economic uses for forest biomass generated as a byproduct of sustainable forest management operations and hazardous fuels treatment activities in the greater North Fork area.

Grading will commence this month, followed by the construction of the facility. Equipment, including the state-of-the art gasifier developed by General Electric, is anticipated to arrive later this year. Feedstock will be sourced from the North Fork Biomass Facility.

The facility is anticipated to be ready for operation in late first quarter 2017, at which time researchers from the University of California, Merced will be studying the results of the technology for the first several months.

This event is coordinated in partnership with Madera County District 5 Supervisor Tom Wheeler's office, with additional support from Sierra Nevada Conservancy and North Fork CDC.

Throughout last year, more than \$10 million, most of it in grants, was awarded for the facility. When operating, it will produce up to one megawatt of energy, enough to power about 1,000 homes a year.

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STAFF REPORT