

# Tuftonboro demonstrates its wood pellet heating system on Biomass Tour

BY ELISSA PAQUETTE  
Staff Writer

TUFTONBORO — Can heating with wood biomass help save taxpayers money support local jobs and the environment? Carroll County United posed that question and invited county residents to answer that question for themselves by taking a tour on Nov. 4 of the Tuftonboro Town House pellet system and the Winnisquam High School wood chip heating plant in Tilton.

Tuftonboro Town Code Officer Jack Parsons greeted participants arriving in a van and cars from their initial meeting place at the Yankee Smoke House in West Ossipee to learn about Tuftonboro's experience with its 109,500 BTU boiler heated with wood pellets.

In the parking lot of the uninsulated Town House, built in 1819, Parsons pointed up to top of its cement block chimney to call the crowd's attention to how clean burning the pellets are.

Not only is there hardly any smoke residue, said Parsons, but the system, purchased from a company that assembles its German-made parts



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On Nov. 4, Tuftonboro Code Officer Jack Parsons introduced participants Carroll County United's Wood Biomass System Tour to Tuftonboro's computer controlled wood pellet system installed in 2010 to heat the old Town House.

in Bethel, Maine, has reduced the town's heating costs. The #2 fuel oil used to heat the old, but venerable Town House cost about \$6,000 in the 2008-09 season; the wood pellets, sourced from local and regional suppliers, heated the building for around \$2,500 in the 2010-11 season.

The pellets, delivered by the ton once a month, are an efficient, processed product (soft wood is preferred) that generates more heat as it is burned in the auto pellet system than wood generates in a wood burning stove.

Tuftonboro's computer-controlled system self-cleans the heat tubes, and service is only needed once a year, at which time it is vacuumed out and the components are checked just as an oil or propane system would be.

The biodegradable ashes only need to be emptied once a month.

Parsons invited visitors to see the system first hand and led them down the steps in small groups to view the shiny copper tubing traversing the ceiling of the boiler room and the two-ton capacity hopper, which feeds the pellets automatically.

The \$29,000 system was entirely funded through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Visitors included Carroll County Commissioner Dorothy Solomon, Tuftonboro Selectman Carolyn Sundquist, Ossipee Code Officer and Wolfeboro Selectman Dave Senecal representing municipal interests. Chuck Henderson, U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen's Special Assistant for Policy and Projects was on hand, as well as others curious to see both a wood pellet and wood chip (Winnisquam



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CARROLL COUNTY COMMISSIONER DOROTHY SOLOMON takes notes as Tuftonboro Code Officer Jack Parsons explains the workings of the town's computer-controlled wood pellet system installed to heat the old Town House. The town saved around \$3,500 in its first heating season (2010-11). The county's system is expected to start operation in late November.

High School in Tilton) system in operation.

Whit Lucy maintenance supervisor for Fryeburg Academy said that the school is expanding some of its facilities and renovating other older buildings, ranging in age from 50 - 100 years old, so he was investigating energy saving options.

Conway homeowner Tony Ammendalia said he was most interested in cost efficiency and whether he could afford a residential system. "The more it catches on," said Ammendalia, "and the more installations, the lower the cost will be in the future."

The group continued on to Tilton to see the wood chip system heating the Winnisquam High School, where the net cost to the district, after factoring in the construction cost, 50 percent building aid from the state and a utility rebate, was estimated to amount to approximately \$1.7 million. Energy savings and

funding by the ARRA is anticipated to generate a 15-year estimated positive cash flow of \$1.2 million.

On the county level, County Commissioner Dorothy Solomon said that she expects the Mountain View Community and administrative buildings to be heated with a wood pellet system housed in the former nursing home as early as the end of the month.

## Thanksgiving planned for comm

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TUFTONBORO — "Celebrate Thanksgiving with your neighbors at Willing Workers Hall on Route 109 in Melvin Village" says an invitation being distributed around Tuftonboro. Kelly

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