



FOR RELEASE: December 1, 2006

For more information contact:
Becky Gay at 269-3024

Chena geothermal project wins international award

Chena Hot Springs Resort's new geothermal unit was named Project of the Year in the Renewables Category as part of an international competition with hundreds of submissions. The alternative energy project, which came online this August, was in part funded by an Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) Power Project Fund loan.

The award was sponsored by Power Engineering Magazine, and was announced Monday at the Power Gen conference in Orlando, Florida.

Chena Power is a local energy power producer located some 57 miles from Fairbanks and is not connected to the grid. The project consists of a 400kW Organic Rankine Cycle (ORC) geothermal power plant with technology especially developed for the project by United Technologies (UTC.) With innovations which include a low temperature boiler dubbed the "Chena Chiller," it is the first power plant operated off fluid from a geothermal resource in Alaska.

Additionally, the power plant will replace a 200kW diesel genset, displacing over 97,500 gallons of diesel per year, with 100% of the resort's power eventually met with geothermal generation.

As of the end of September, Chena was saving 291 gallons of diesel per day, according to AEA Program Manager Rebecca Garrett, with more savings projected once a second 200 kW unit comes online.

"Thanks to everyone who has made this project possible, and especially our partners at the Department of Energy, Alaska Energy Authority and United Technologies Corporation," said Gwen Holdman, VP of New Business Development for Chena Hot Springs Resort.

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