



Brookston Community Center's woodchip-fueled hydronic boiler uses cutting-edge top-feed fuel technology to eliminate clogs and minimize maintenance downtime. Photo by Joshua Gregory, Office of Indian Energy.

Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Notice of Substantial Completion—Biomass Heating Project

The Department of Energy's (DOE's) Office of Indian Energy is pleased to announce that the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa has substantially completed a new biomass district heating system for its Brookston Community Center, with the potential for future expansion to heat nearby homes.

The system utilizes wood chips, a byproduct of local timber processing, and is projected to save approximately \$31,000 annually, improving energy affordability. The Tribe held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 12, 2025 to celebrate the project, which was funded in part by a grant from the Office of Indian Energy.

Project Description:

Drawing on its prior experience with biomass heating systems, the Fond du Lac Band took a leading role in the design and contracting of the facility, integrating innovative technologies to maximize system reliability. Previously, the Band completed a similar system at its Sawyer Community Center and implemented communitywide energy efficiency upgrades, resulting in more than \$1 million in annual savings. For the Brookston project, the Band selected commercially proven technology made in the United States, which complements an existing backup propane generator to ensure energy reliability during power outages. The Band is monitoring and verifying project performance and cost savings and will share the data with DOE and other stakeholders.

Project Overview

Awardee: Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Location: Cloquet, MN

Project Title: Brookston Community Center Biomass Heating System

DOE Grant Number: DE-IE0000191

Projected Impacts:

- **Energy Affordability:** \$31,000 saved per year
- **Energy Addition:** 3 MMBtu/hr added heating capacity

Project Amounts:

- **DOE Office of Indian Energy:** \$2,492,216
- **Awardee cost-share:** \$625,838
- **Total:** \$3,118,054

Start: 08/01/2024

End: 07/31/2027



The biomass heating system facility for the Brookston Community Center was designed and constructed through a collaborative effort involving Tribal leadership, engineers, and local contractors. Photo by Joshua Gregory, Office of Indian Energy.

About the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

The Fond du Lac Reservation lies in northeastern Minnesota adjacent to the City of Cloquet, approximately 25 miles southwest of the City of Duluth. The Treaty of 1854 between the U.S. government and the Lake Superior Bands of Chippewa established the Fond du Lac Reservation, which comprises more than 101,000 acres. There are 4,000 enrolled Band members and 2,000 employees who work for the Band.

About the Office of Indian Energy

Established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Office of Indian Energy aims to promote Indian Tribal energy development, efficiency, and use; reduce or stabilize energy costs; enhance and strengthen Tribal energy and economic infrastructure related to natural resource development and electrification; and extend electrical power and service to Indian lands and Tribal members' homes (42 U.S.C. § 7144e). The UTTC project was competitively selected under the Office of Indian Energy's funding opportunity DE-FOA-0003298 which was fully supported by annual appropriations.

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