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## **Department of Energy Official Highlights President Bush's Energy Initiatives in the Greater Grand Rapids Area**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – To promote President Bush's new energy initiatives, Department of Energy (DOE) Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs Karen A. Harbert toured the Steelcase Wood Plant in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center in Muskegon, Michigan, today. Assistant Secretary Harbert discussed the president's Advanced Energy and American Competitiveness Initiative during both visits.

“What I'm seeing today are tremendous examples of how private companies can take significant steps to incorporate renewable energy and energy conservation into their own personal energy mix,” Assistant Secretary Harbert said. “The president's energy policies support the development of additional renewable energy technologies to make them market competitive and more affordable to consumers. By working together and diversifying our nation's energy supply, we can continue to strengthen our nation's energy security.”

Steelcase Wood Plant is known as the world's first manufacturing plant to receive the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. The LEED program is a voluntary certification system designed to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable, and healthy places for people to live and work. Steelcase also participates in the Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Leaders program that encourages companies to establish corporate-wide greenhouse gas reduction goals.

The Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center (MAREC) is the first fully integrated demonstration facility for distributed generation of electricity using alternative and renewable energy technologies in the U.S. MAREC seeks to create and attract new business in alternative energy technologies that can be widely employed globally. Its facility is LEED-certified and uses advanced electric generation systems, including fuel cell, photovoltaic solar roof tiles, and nickel metal hydride battery for power. In the near future MAREC plans to use renewable energy based on methane from biomass as an operational model demonstration.

During her visit to Grand Rapids, Assistant Secretary Harbert also met with Grand Rapids Interurban Transit Partnership executives and visited The Rapid Central Station. The Rapids Central Station is the first and only LEED certified transit facility in the country. Following this, Assistant Secretary Harbert participated in a roundtable luncheon with Michigan Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers (R-3<sup>rd</sup>) and other community and business leaders from the Greater Grand Rapids area to discuss President Bush's energy initiatives.

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At all three stops today, Assistant Secretary Harbert highlighted President Bush's energy initiatives. The Advanced Energy Initiative requests \$2.1 billion, a 22 percent budget increase, to develop new technologies and alternative sources of energy to help diversify and strengthen our nation's energy mix. The American Competitiveness Initiative is a multi-agency commitment that will ensure America remains competitive in the global marketplace. As part of the American Competitiveness Initiative, funding for science research will double to nearly \$19.5 billion in 2016 at DOE's Office of Science, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology. The funding increase will begin in FY 2007 with the three offices receiving a total of \$10.66 billion, an increase of 9.3% over FY 2006.

As part of the Bush Administration's broader effort to promote production and use of alternative and renewable sources of energy, Administration officials are traveling the country to promote President Bush's energy initiatives. Secretary Bodman made a total of four stops around the country this week, promoting the Advanced Energy and American Competitiveness Initiatives, in addition to highlighting a number of energy efficiency programs, notably biomass (including cellulosic ethanol), solar and hydrogen.

On Wednesday, February 22, 2006, Secretary Bodman, met with students and teachers at the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility in Newport News, Virginia, to discuss the importance of science and math education. Also on Wednesday, Secretary Bodman toured the Archer Daniels Midland Ethanol plant in Decatur, Illinois, and announced a \$160 million solicitation for biorefinery construction. Yesterday, February 23, 2006, Secretary Bodman discussed the president's energy initiatives with employees at two stops; the first at GT Solar in Merrimack, New Hampshire, to promote the Solar America Initiative, and the second at General Motors Fuel Cell Activities in Honeoye Falls, to discuss hydrogen research and development.

Also this week, DOE Assistant Secretary Jeff Jarrett will visit the National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown, West Virginia; and Assistant Secretary John Shaw delivered remarks at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Acting Assistant Secretary Doug Faulkner will make two stops; yesterday, he delivered remarks at the Biomass and Switchgrass Conference at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. Today, Faulkner will visit the Gerdau Ameristeel Mill Savings Assessment in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, to promote the president's energy initiatives and energy efficiency.

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