



Press Release

Building work begins on Western Switzerland's largest power plant based on wood by-products

Enerbois SA, a joint venture set up by Romande Energie and Scierie Zahnd in December 2007, plans to produce electricity, heat and pellets from wood by-products. This project will lead to the creation of Western Switzerland's largest biomass plant. Located at Rueyres in the Canton of Vaud, the new plant is expected to be commissioned early in 2010.

Rueyres, 7 November 2008 – Today sees the start of construction work on a biomass power plant to produce electricity, heat and wood pellets from by-products of the Zahnd sawmill. The plant will be operated by Enerbois SA, a joint venture between Romande Energie and Scierie Zahnd. This project represents an investment of CHF 37 million.

Producing electricity, heat and pellets with by-products of the sawmill

This involves burning strips of bark and pieces of wood in order to generate around 28,000,000 kWh per year (equivalent to the energy consumption of 7,000 households) and heat for industrial purposes, as well as producing pellets from sawdust for the consumption of 3,000 households. More specifically, the project consists of constructing a thermal power station with a condensation steam turbine in close proximity to the sawmill. The pellet production unit will be located in the same building, which will be half the size of a football pitch. The new plant is designed to blend in well with its surroundings.

An exemplary project in several respects:

- **An example of industrial ecology**

The energy balance of wood-based power generation is neutral, as the amount of CO₂ released during combustion corresponds to the CO₂ that the wood has absorbed throughout its lifetime. Moreover, the sawmill's by-products will not be sold to third parties but used on the site itself to produce electricity and pellets, thus reducing traffic by around 2,000 lorries a year. This benefits both the environment and the neighbourhood. Finally, the architecture has been specially conceived so that the plant can merge smoothly into the landscape, allowing for the slope of the ground and providing the building with a line of trees and wooden façades.

- **An example of a circular economy**

The new biomass power plant is an exemplary achievement in terms of the optimum use of wood. The wood, which is produced mainly by regional owners, municipalities and the canton, is processed at Rueyres, as are its by-products. The resultant eco-energy and pellets meet consumer demand among businesses and households within the canton. The heat is used on the site itself. The various stages of value



creation in this process are therefore perfectly integrated, extending from local supply to local consumption.

- **An example of cooperation between the public and private sectors**

This project is the fruit of close cooperation with the Rueyres municipal authorities. Thanks to the joint efforts undertaken by Enerbois and the Cantonal Administration, as well as the support provided by the Vaud Government, this project has reached the launch pad in the minimum of time.

A webcam showing the progress of the building work in realtime can be viewed at www.enerbois.ch.

Note to editorial desks

A project in line with the environmental strategy adopted by Romande Energie

Romande Energie has set itself a dual objective: five years from now, 10% of the electricity it produces – i.e. 50 GWh – will be derived from renewable energy resources; and by 2030, 10% of the electricity it distributes – amounting to 250 GWh – will come from renewable resources. The Rueyres plant will make an important contribution to achieving these objectives, since it will generate 28 GWh a year.

Work on the products of nature by Scierie Zahnd

With an annual intake of 120,000 square metres of wood, Scierie Zahnd SA is the leading sawmill in Vaud Canton and the fourth largest in Switzerland. In 2010, it should be handling a volume of 200,000 m³. This SME, a family company with 35 employees, must take an innovative approach in a rapidly evolving market. Aware as it is that stepping up its activities would lead to a marked increase in road traffic, it chose to have most of its by-products used locally by creating Enerbois SA in partnership with Romande Energie.

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