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External agencies take note of Furman's environmental efforts

Furman University

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External agencies take note of Furman's environmental efforts

Furman's commitment to environmental citizenship and the development of greater environmental consciousness within the university community and beyond has earned it recognition from a variety of advocacy groups and organizations.

The American Council on Renewable Energy's Higher Education Committee invited the university to be part of a steering group that will encourage institutions of higher learning to play a leading role in helping to move renewable energy into the mainstream of the American economy and lifestyle. The committee will provide forums, information, tools and other resources to promote increased use of renewable energy on U.S. college campuses, increased investment of endowments in clean energy funds and companies, resources for the education of current and future generations, and involvement by alumni associations.

Furman is one of 25 institutions invited to participate. Among the others: University of California, University of Florida, Arizona State, Carnegie Mellon, Cornell, Emory and Texas Tech. To learn more, visit www.acore.org.

SKY Energy, Inc., a Greenville-based renewable energy company, has contributed 1,250,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of Wind-e Renewable Energy Certificates to Furman in recognition of the university's Year of the Environment celebration.

A Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) represents the benefit, in reduced carbon

emissions, of one megawatt-hour of generated electricity. The amount provided to Furman represented approximately 50 percent of the university's total electricity use for the month of December 2006, which offset the emission of more than 1.7 million pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

RECs are the certified environmental benefits of wind energy that improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gases. The electricity generated from wind farms is delivered to the national energy grid and not directly to Furman.

SKY Energy's donation qualified Furman for membership in the Environmental Protection Agency's Green Power Partnership, a group of businesses, government agencies and institutions of higher education that are investing in renewable energy to reduce the environmental impact of their electricity use. To learn more, visit www.sky-energy.com.

Furman is also a charter signatory of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, and President David Shi has been selected to serve in the group's Leadership Circle.

The American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment is an effort to make campuses more sustainable and to address global warming by garnering institutional commitments to reduce — and ultimately neutralize — greenhouse gas emissions on campuses. Schools were selected to be part of the group because of their demonstrated leadership in sustainability efforts.

The commitment states that the signatories "believe colleges and universities must exercise leadership in their communities and throughout society by modeling ways to minimize global warming emissions, and by providing the knowledge and the educated graduates to achieve climate neutrality. Campuses that address the climate challenge by reducing global warming emissions and by integrating sustainability into their curriculum will better serve their students and meet their social mandate to help create a thriving, ethical and civil society." Learn more at www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org.

The South Carolina Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council awarded Furman its Leadership Award in the Private Sector for the university's commitment to sustainability and green building construction. According to the organization, Furman has been an exemplar for institutions and groups throughout South Carolina, and the university's Herman N. Hipp Hall "remains the benchmark for future green buildings in the state."

And in January, the South Carolina Wildlife Federation gave Furman its Organization Award. The federation cited Furman's "myriad programs for reducing its environmental footprint and incorporating 'green' architecture," and praised the university's efforts to integrate sustainability into the educational experience.