



January 19, 2012

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MEDIA ADVISORY - Cal Poly Partners with California Energy Commission to Launch Algae-Based Wastewater Treatment Plant

WHAT: Cal Poly faculty and students will demonstrate a new technology that uses algae to treat wastewater and produces biofuel as a byproduct. The system could be used at wastewater treatment facilities throughout California.

WHEN: Monday, Jan. 23, 11 a.m. to noon

WHERE: San Luis Obispo Water Reclamation Facility, 35 Prado Road, San Luis Obispo

MORE DETAILS: This facility is a pilot development based on a system designed at Cal Poly and called Reclamation of Nutrients, Energy and Water (RNEW). Oil-rich algae feed on polluting nutrients in the wastewater. The effect is purified water and an increased volume of algae that can be converted to commodities such as liquid biofuel or fertilizer.

The research treatment station is powered by electricity from the City of San Luis Obispo, but a full-scale system would be powered by renewable energy, reducing electrical demand for wastewater treatment. A full-scale system would also reduce greenhouse gasses, because it absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

The research facility is funded by a grant from the California Energy Commission and matching funds from MicroBio Engineering Inc. The project is supported by the City of San Luis Obispo, Phitec LLC, Livefuels Inc., and the U.S. Office of Naval Research.

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