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Wind Energy Survey

Altaeros Energies is a small business that is working towards a more efficient and economical source of wind energy for farmers and for members of rural communities. Its patent-pending airborne wind turbine is a more reliable source that is able harness higher altitudes winds that are 5x stronger than tower-mounted wind turbines can reach. Our company is currently funded through a US Department of Agriculture Rural Communities grant to support renewable energy innovation. With help from the University of Maine – Presque Isle, we have developed a short survey to gather the perspectives of members in rural communities on new wind turbine technologies. We would greatly appreciate your feedback so that we can continue to develop our product and improve the livelihoods in remote areas and farming communities.

The deadline to complete the survey is **February 10, 2012**: <http://www.umpi.maine.edu/cgi-bin/remark5/rws5.pl?FORM=windsurvey>

Thank you for your time and help, and feel free to email us with any questions at info@altaerosenergies.com

USDA Rural Development Announces Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Notice of Funding Availability for 2012

USDA announced last Friday the Notification of Funding Availability for their annual REAP Program. Initiated as part of the Farm Bill in 2002, this program provides grants and loan guarantees for rural area agriculture and small business. Some highlights of this year's program include:

- Program will support nationally approximately \$12.5 million in budget authority for grants and \$48.5 million for loan guarantees.
- Grant offerings include funding for 25% of eligible costs for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements; renewable energy feasibility studies; energy audits and renewable energy development assistance.
- Loan Guarantees for eligible renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements, either alone or in combination with a grant request.
- USDA will allocate state funds from the overall budget – MDAR awaits state fund allocation information.
- USDA will also have a national pool of funds allocated for oversubscribed state pools - MDAR awaits National pool fund allocation information.

- Prioritizes \$20,000 and less grant and loan guarantee requests (total project costs of \$80,000 or less).
- Program overall has been cut to 60% of last year's funds - the program has been oversubscribed every year and with reduced funding, this year will be very competitive.
- Grant applications and combined grant and guaranteed loan applications for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvement projects will be accepted up to March 30, 2012.
- Guaranteed loan only applications for renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement projects will be accepted on a continuous basis, but to compete for Fiscal Year 2012 funding, complete applications must be submitted to the Agency by June 29, 2012.
- Applications for renewable energy feasibility studies will be accepted up to **March 30, 2012**.
- Energy audit and renewable energy development assistance grants will be accepted up to February 21, 2012.

For more information please see the attached Notice from the Federal Register and contact your local USDA Office to determine eligibility and learn about program details.

The [Massachusetts Farm Energy Program](#) may be providing limited grant writing assistance this year to farmers for REAP applications, with support from MDAR. Please fill out an application for possible grant writing support at - http://www.berkshirerioneercd.org/mfep/forms/grant_writing.php. If you have any questions, please contact Jess or Layla at (413)256-1607.



MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – MDAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit MDAR's website at mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/agcommishsoares. For our ongoing list of events and workshops, visit and bookmark: www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming_up.htm.