

LOOKING IN ON: CARSON CITY:

Contract for wood could fire up dormant power plant

Prisons facility has gone unused for lack of fuel

By [Cy Ryan](#)

Fri, May 30, 2008 (2 a.m.)

Carson City — An \$8.3 million wood-burning prison energy plant that has been a failure so far may soon move ahead full steam.

The biomass plant was built to supply electricity to the Northern Nevada Correctional Center and the Stewart Conservation Camp, both of which are south of Carson City.

But the prison has been unable to collect enough wood and the facility has been shut down for more than three months.

Lorraine Bagwell, deputy director of support services for the state Corrections Department, said six bids have been received to provide wood to fuel the plant. She expects to sign a contract by June 20 for one or more companies to supply the fuel.

In recent test runs the plant, which in the past had operated at only 50 percent of capacity, operated at full capacity. After air quality tests, which will be completed by June 20, the state Environmental Protection Division will decide whether to give the plant a permit.

The plant, which opened in September and was slated to replace electricity and natural gas at the two correctional facilities, has never lived up to its potential. The department has been spending \$200,000 a month to buy energy and pay off the construction loan.

The lack of wood wasn't the only problem. The prisons' staff found the operation was too complicated to manage and hired Universal Energy to run the plant until June 2009.

The Legislature's Fiscal Analysis Division predicts the facility will lose money for 17 years. Bagwell, though, thinks it will pay for itself in two years.

...

[Luxury Homes in Las Vegas](#)

New Resort Living Homes in Lake Las Vegas
by Pardee Homes

[LSAT Score 160 or Above?](#)

Accepting Apps For Fall 2008 Scholarships
Available - Apply Now!