

**Burgess appointed Lignite Research, Development & Marketing Director**

BISMARCK – The North Dakota Industrial Commission has appointed Jeff Burgess as Research and Development Director for the Lignite Energy Council and Technical Representative to the Commission.

Burgess is currently the director of the Lignite Vision 21 Program, a state/industry partnership designed to encourage construction of the next “state-of-the-art” power plant in North Dakota.

The appointment is effective Jan. 1, 2006. Burgess succeeds Harvey Ness, who is retiring after serving in both positions since April 2002.

“Choosing Jeff to lead the Lignite Research, Development and Marketing Program is an important decision both to the lignite industry and the state of North Dakota,” Gov. Hoeven said. “The R&D program identifies and provides resources for projects that address existing environmental and operational concerns and supports our efforts to fulfill the enormous potential we have in the regional lignite industry.”

“While directing the Lignite Vision 21 program, Jeff has been hard-working and dedicated to his work,” said Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem. “We know he will bring that same level of commitment to the Lignite R&D program.”

“Under Jeff’s leadership the Lignite Research Program will continue its record of promoting and assisting with research that is timely and focused on meeting the challenges facing the lignite industry,” said Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson.

“Jeff is familiar with the lignite industry and has worked closely with Harvey Ness for the past three and half years,” said John Dwyer, President of the Lignite Energy Council. “His knowledge of environmental issues and the Lignite Vision 21 program give him a strong background from which to lead future R&D efforts that benefit the industry, people living in the state and Main Street businesses.”

A Bismarck native, Burgess holds master’s degrees in environmental engineering and public administration, and is registered professional engineer. Prior to joining the Lignite Energy Council in 2001, he was Division Director of Air Quality at the North Dakota Department of Health.

The Industrial Commission of North Dakota, consisting of Gov. John Hoeven as chairman, Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem, and Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson, oversees the Lignite R&D Program, which has provided more than \$38 million in state funds for over 165 lignite-related R&D projects since 1987. The program receives about \$3 million from a 10-cent-per-ton R&D allocation from the coal severance tax. The state dollars are matched with both private and public investments. R&D investments to date for all projects total more than \$284 million.