



## Press release, February 2008

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### SACC-USA Seminar at House of Sweden:

## Swedish Know-How Can Help the U.S. Cut Oil Dependency and Switch to Green

*Enough talking, it's time to Change to Green* was the message at a SACC-USA February 6 seminar in Washington, D.C. where 150 Swedish and American business men and women came together to explore new opportunities in clean tech.

“The largest problem for the U.S. is lack of competitiveness in an era where energy is continuing to be expensive,” said **Ross Harding**, head of **Energy Launch Partner**, and in charge of the clean tech cluster at the upcoming Edays in Savannah, Georgia, April 20-22. The U.S. was lulled into complacency by cheap oil, while Sweden pushed bioenergy and energy efficiency. “These technologies are known and have been used in Sweden for 40 years. They can be deployed now, the economics works, and we are seeing it happening quickly,” he said, adding that we are standing in the brink of an enormous growth in spending on biomass-based energy. “The opportunities are truly enormous,” he said.

**Doug Parks**, Sr. VP at the **Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)** spoke about how the state is fighting its deep economic crisis by going green, emulating Sweden’s Triple Helix-model. “It has resulted in legislation with close to half a billion dollars worth of incentives for growing industry sectors in the state of Michigan. Many have involved Swedish companies,” he said.

**Jason Hartke**, director at the **Green Building Council**, highlighted the huge potential to save on energy and protect the environment by making buildings more energy efficient, something that can be done using existing technology, and which is a sound fiscal policy, as it lowers the costs, whether it is a poor family struggling with its utility bill, a local government wasting money on energy inefficient school buildings or the federal government spending too much on running its many federal buildings.

**Gustav Melin**, president of the **Swedish Bioenergy Association**, gave an overview of the growth of bioenergy in Sweden over the past twenty years leading up to a situation where 27 percent of Sweden’s energy is bioenergy. Back in the 1970’s, Sweden’s oil dependency was 77 percent, but it is dwindling quickly, and set to be largely phased out by 2020. Sweden will surpass its goal of 49 percent renewable energy by 2020, and reach 65 percent renewable energy. “It will be quite easy,” Gustav Melin said.

**Rick LeBlanc**, CEO of **Chemrec AB**’s new U.S. subsidiary showed how the Swedish company is converting traditional pulp and paper mills into dual use facilities that can produce

both pulp and paper as well as bioenergy from black liquor, until now seen as a waste product. *"It's a truly transformative business model,"* he said.

The *Change to Green* seminar was arranged by SACC-USA in cooperation with the Embassy of Sweden, National Property Board Sweden, and SACC Washington DC. About 150 business people, and local, state and federal U.S. officials, as well as Hungary, France and Thailand participated in the half-day seminar at House of Sweden.

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**About SACC-USA:**

*SACC-USA is the umbrella organization for 20 regional Swedish-American Chambers of Commerce across the U.S., serving more than 2,300 members. We are the 2nd largest European Chamber of Commerce in the U.S. Characterized by a truly entrepreneurial way of doing business, the SACC-USA network has positioned itself as a key player in facilitating trade, commerce and investment between Sweden and the U.S. For more information about our organization, please visit [www.sacc-usa.org](http://www.sacc-usa.org).*