



Eastern-in-the-News



AS REGION'S WIND INDUSTRY STRENGTHENS, SO DOES EASTERN'S TRAINING PROGRAM

Moorefield — Aug. 23 — After 20 months on the job, Ward Malcolm still believes the vision. “Electric power generated by wind is finally becoming a reality in America, and a big part of it is growing rapidly right here in our area,” he noted recently in his office at Eastern WV Community and Technical College, where he currently serves as Dean of Career, Technical and Workforce Education.

“It’s something our country needs on many levels — for jobs, for the economy, and for national security. And I believe Eastern’s wind turbine technician training program can quickly become the standard by which other training programs will be measured,” said Malcolm, who, with 23 years as a professional electrical engineer, enjoys a broad and successful experience in all of the technical aspects underlying wind turbine operations.

As the primary developer of Eastern’s Wind Energy Turbine Technology (WETT) training program, Malcolm understands that the ability of its graduates to find technical jobs in the industry will provide one key gauge of the program’s success. So it’s important to him to keep track of the industry’s growth and progress in the area, and of the resulting increase in related job opportunities.

Industry Bets on Eastern

“With some 649 wind turbines currently producing energy or under construction in our four-state area, and another 303 turbines proposed or now involved in the permitting process,” Malcolm pointed out, “industry managers in this region foresee a need for some 60 new turbine service technicians every year.”



NedPower Partners Invest In Local Wind Technology Training Program: Dominion Power and Shell Wind Energy, the two corporate partners who own the NedPower Wind Farm on Mt. Storm, each present educators from Eastern WV Community and Technical College with checks for two-thousand dollars earlier this summer to support the college’s Wind Energy Turbine Technology training program.

FROM LEFT: Mike Warner, Site Supervisor, Dominion Power; Eastern’s Malcolm, Dean of Career, Technical and Workforce Education; Eastern President Charles “Chuck” Terrell; Grover Duling, Eastern’s Wind Energy Turbine

Technology Consultant, and Co-coordinator of the Potomac Highlands College Tech Prep Consortium; and David Myers, Operations Manager, Shell Wind Energy.

Malcolm also emphasized that industry executives associated with local wind projects have invested both their expertise and their resources in support of Eastern's program. "Dominion Power and Shell Wind Energy, the partner-owners of the NedPower farm on Mt. Storm, each donated \$2-thousand to Eastern this summer for the purchase of safety equipment related to turbine technology training.

"Then, too," he said, "managers and other executives from several wind farms serve on our Program Advisory Board, to make sure that we keep up-to-date with industry training needs. And just this semester, two of our students have begun their third-semester internships at the Pinnacle Wind Farm in Keyser."

Career Advancement

Entry-level wind turbine service technicians start at around \$17 per hour with comprehensive benefits included, according to wind energy experts and published help-wanted ads. And to train local men and women to qualify for those technician jobs, under Malcolm's direction the college now offers both a one-year College Certificate and a two-year Associate in Applied Science degree in the field.

Eastern students in this program learn not only the skills necessary to service and trouble-shoot modern wind power generation equipment as technicians anywhere in the world, Malcolm explained, they also acquire the background and knowledge to advance their careers in the power generation field.

"Eastern is located at the hub of a booming wind industry expansion," he emphasized. "Just last year, three new farms totaling 95 units with a combined generating capacity of 170 megawatts opened in counties neighboring our service district." And while most of the electricity added to the energy grid in the past from wind turbines has powered homes and businesses, Malcolm believes that the near future promises far more.

Plug-In Fill-Ups

Largely in response to the ever-deepening appetites of emerging economies in Asia and Latin America, most observers believe that fossil fuel costs will keep rising over the coming years, even as the price of wind energy continues to fall. "So the day is not far off — within eight or ten years, I'd guess at most," Malcolm suggested, "that Americans will be powering not only their homes and workplaces with wind, but even their cars."

With electric and hybrid cars already rolling off the assembly lines, he said, consumers will soon become accustomed to "filling her up" at a plug-in outlet. "Wind offers an affordable, inexhaustible supply that can go a long way towards meeting a broad spectrum of our energy needs," said Malcolm.

"And by displacing our dependence on OPEC's oil," he added, "it will also contribute to safeguarding our national security."

For more information about Eastern's Wind Energy Turbine Technology program, financial aid opportunities, and other programs of study and workforce training, call toll free: 877-982-2322; or check the College's website: www.easternwv.edu.

Serving the residents of Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Pendleton and Tucker counties, and fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College is a comprehensive and equal opportunity community and technical college bringing the resources and assets of Education That Works to the families, communities and employers of the Potomac Highlands.