



P.O. Box 95085, Lincoln, NE 68509-5085, Phone 402.471.2867, Fax 402.471.3064
Email: energy@nebraska.gov Web Site: www.neo.ne.gov

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For More Information Contact:
Jerry Loos, 402.471.3356, jerry.loos@nebraska.gov

NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGES LAUNCH RENEWABLE ENERGY COURSES Nebraska Energy Office Provides \$1.9 Million *Recovery Act* Funding

LINCOLN – Nebraska’s Community Colleges now offer programs in renewable energy technologies – wind, solar, hydropower, geothermal and biofuels. With a total of \$1.9 million in *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* grants from the Nebraska Energy Office to six community college systems, the colleges have added coursework and training equipment across the state to prepare students for careers in renewable energy fields.

“There is increasing demand for workers with expertise in installing, maintaining, and operating new types of renewable energy equipment and facilities. I’m pleased the community colleges are filling this occupational training void,” said Energy Office Director Ginger Willson.

Teams of instructors from across the state have developed courses in wind, solar, hydropower and geothermal technologies using national competency standards, and continue to expand the course offerings. Instructors have received training from organizations such as the American Wind Energy Association, National Hydropower Association, Geothermal Energy Association, Solar Energy Institute, and others who offer the most advanced thinking in renewable energy.

Course Specifics, Locations, Degrees and More

Central Community College, Hastings – Mechatronics Program: Fundamentals necessary to install, maintain, and repair the latest equipment in varied manufacturing and industrial facilities. In Fall 2012, the Renewable Energy option will prepare students for entry level positions in wind and solar energy installation, operation, and maintenance; Two-year Associate of Applied Technology degree.

Contact Dan Gompert, 402-463-9811 ext. 2437, dgompert@cccneb.edu ; or Dale Long, 402-463-9811 ext. 2549, dlong@cccneb.edu ; website at www.cccneb.edu

Metropolitan Community College, Omaha – Solar Energy Program: Part of the Sustainability Initiative, which includes weatherization, green living, urban farming and related courses. There are three types of active solar: electric, air, and water. Each type of active solar has one theory class, one overview class and three installation classes. Students will have the opportunity to use best practices on the latest equipment and applications. Additional classes: general renewables (wind, hydro, solar), passive solar and solar site selection. There are no pre-requisites. Six types of specialist Certificates.

Contact Michael Shonka, 402-738-4536, mshonka@mccneb.edu; website at www.mccneb.edu/green

Mid-Plains Community College, North Platte – Energy Production: Diesel, electrical, HVAC/R and welding programs. Energy producers in Nebraska are looking for employees with knowledge in mechanical skills, electrical skills, electronics, hydraulics, welding, motor control, machining skills, computer skills, print and plan readers, programmable controllers instrumentation and process control; Associate Degree of Applied Science in Hydro Electrical Mechanical Technology.

Contact Kent Beel, 308-535-3651, beelk@mpcc.edu; website at www.mpcc.edu

Northeast Community College, Norfolk – Wind Energy Program: Students learn rigging and climbing safety in and around a wind turbine, wind energy fundamentals, blueprint reading, control systems and SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) systems and wind turbine siting. Degree: Wind Energy Diploma or an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Wind Energy Technology. Wayne State College accepts up to 60 credit hours from Northeast toward a Bachelor of Science degree in technology.

Contact Lyle Kathol, 402-844-7215, lylek@northeast.edu; website at www.northeast.edu

Southeast Community College, Milford – Energy Generation Operations Program: A comprehensive program of study that provides training in multiple energy systems: Renewable wind and biofuels specializations and traditional fossil fuel and nuclear programs. Students learn skills for power plant operators, ethanol production operators, wind farm technicians and operators, as well as operators of other types of energy production facilities. Programs are certified by the Wind Energy Association and the Nuclear Energy Institute. Program is designed with five quarters of for several types of energy operations. In the sixth quarter, specific types of fuel operations prepare students for careers in the type of energy generating plant of their choosing. Degree: Associates of Applied Science in Energy Generation Operations.

Contact John Pierce, 402-761-8394, 800-933-7223 Ext. 8394, energy@southeast.edu; website at www.southeast.edu

Western Nebraska Community College, Sidney – Wind Turbine Technician Program: A one-semester Skill Award focused on entry-level training: basic maintenance, physical ability, safety and electricity fundamentals. Long-term plans include a 36-Credit Certificate and industry specific training/retraining.

Contact Jason Stratman, 308-635-6740, stratman@wncc.edu; website at www.wncc.edu

These courses have been developed with U.S. Department of Energy, State Energy Program/*American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* funds received by the Nebraska Energy Office.

The Nebraska Energy Office was created in 1977 to promote the efficient, economic and environmentally responsible use of energy. It is an authoritative voice and comprehensive resource center for energy issues in the State of Nebraska. In addition, the energy office plays an important role in fostering new growth in our renewable energy industry and helping Nebraska lead the way in the new clean energy economy. For more information, please visit www.neo.ne.gov.

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