

Cascades Alliance for Renewable Energy Training

Challenge and opportunity in the Columbia River Gorge of Oregon & Washington

Mission: Meet urgent, immediate industry demand for a skilled renewable energy workforce by expanding the West Coast's first wind energy technician program into a workforce training "pipeline."

Unsolicited Concept Paper — March 2007

Challenge: Led by rapid development of wind farms across Eastern Oregon and Washington, the renewable energy industry critically needs a trained workforce. Wind farms now under construction or permitted will hire more than 300 technicians, and continued growth of renewable energy industries will create hundreds of additional direct and indirect family-wage positions. Regional workforce training is an immediate, demonstrated need.

Opportunity: In response, Columbia Gorge Community College and its workforce partners created the first wind energy technician program on the West Coast. The program's curriculum is designed with technical assistance from the wind energy industry to assure responsiveness. The industry has donated training equipment. A six-month pilot program began in January 2007, and will expand in the fall of 2007 to offer one-year certificates and two-year associate degrees. Graduates will be prepared for a broad variety of technology-related fields, including the spectrum of renewable energy industries. Alliance partners — representing education, workforce training, economic development, business and industry — will then identify additional opportunities to help grow the region's economy by creating a workforce training "pipeline."

Urgent need: Although the State of Oregon has provided start-up funding, the college is relying primarily upon its own contingency funding to meet program costs. Federal assistance is urgently needed to support the one-year certificate and two-year degree programs during their initial phase of operations.

Sustainability: The programs will be sustained by partnerships with the renewable energy industry.

Federal request: \$726,000 **Contact:** Daniel Spatz, CGCC Resource Development, dspatz@cgcc.cc.or.us (541) 506-6110



