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News Release

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NMCC instructor publishes textbook

Aroostook County - When Wayne Kilcollins joined the faculty at Northern Maine Community College in 2009, he knew he would face some challenges in getting the College's new wind power technology program up and running. He just didn't realize from where some of those might come.

There was curriculum to finalize, a lab to equip, textbooks to purchase and a myriad of other responsibilities to prepare for the ultimate goal of educating students in this new career field. Finding the right textbook proved to be more difficult than he anticipated, but thanks to his initiative, three years later Kilcollins has now resolved that issue for himself and for the instructors of similar programs nationwide.

Maintenance Fundamentals for Wind Technicians, written by Kilcollins, will be released this week. This is the first college textbook focused on wind turbine maintenance for wind technician associate degree programs available in the United States.

"Necessity is the mother of invention," said Kilcollins. "I called around to a bunch of publishers and told them what I was looking for and asked if they had anything like what I needed."

The response was similar from every publisher: textbooks only existed for four-year and graduate programs. "In the United States, wind power is still a young industry. There really was nothing available at the associate degree level," he explained.

One of the publishers, Delmar Cengage Learning, however, called Kilcollins back to see if he would be willing to write such a book, since it was a market that they wanted to break into. As a new faculty member, trying to develop a new program, Kilcollins felt a little unsure about the daunting task of adding another dimension to his already large job description. After much personal debate, he decided to sign a contract with Delmar Cengage Learning.

"I'd never written a book before, so I knew there would be a learning curve, but I had done a lot of writing for my Master's degree," Kilcollins said. "And in the past, I had written instructional manuals and other workplace documents when I was working in industry, so I knew I could do it."

Despite a grueling work schedule, Kilcollins used every available free moment over the last two years to write his textbook.

“When the program began, we had to be creative in using academic resources from Europe and the general industry,” Kilcollins said. “Now we have a support textbook that was specifically designed to work within our national college system for maintenance activities.”

“Wayne’s commitment to wind power technology, as well as teaching and learning, have come together in his textbook,” said NMCC President Tim Crowley. “We expect his work will be used throughout the industry as the demand for technical programs grows. We are fortunate to have him as a faculty member at NMCC, and we congratulate him on this exciting project.”

Crowley’s prediction is already proving to be true, and NMCC is not the only institution excited about the textbook release. The College’s wind power technology program is one of the first of ten such programs developed in the United States to serve the growing US wind industry with skilled technicians. Instructors teaching in the other wind programs are also eagerly anticipating the book’s release.

“All of these instructors are in the same position as I am; they had no textbook to use,” Kilcollins said. “Some of the wind faculty members have already told me what classes they are going to develop around the book.”

All of the information in *Maintenance Fundamentals for Wind Technicians* was peer reviewed by colleagues from other wind programs. “Once a chapter was done, the publisher sent it out for review,” Kilcollins explained.

In addition, the book was created with substantial industry support. The PLARAD Group, in its role as a “global player” in the wind power industry, supported this project by providing torque tools and corresponding training seminars in Maine, as well as photo material used in the book. Additional technical support and content also came from First Wind, The University of Maine in Presque Isle, and Cianbro Corporation.

With an emphasis on both practice and theory, *Maintenance Fundamentals for Wind Technicians* provides a comprehensive introduction to the field of wind energy that is appropriate for any electrical or mechanical technician. Through topics such as developing a preventative maintenance program, determining the performance of a wind turbine system, and monitoring improvement through system data analysis, this text teaches students the skills they need to be successful wind energy technicians. Safety-related practices, such as working at heights, tower rescue practices and offshore projects are emphasized to ensure that students understand the hazards associated with working in the wind industry. Filled with hands-on exercises, applications, troubleshooting tips, and learning objectives keyed to American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) skills, students will learn everything they need to know about servicing and troubleshooting turbines on wind farms.

The book will be unveiled publically for the first time at the AWEA WindPower Exhibition and Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, at a special ceremony held at the Maine Wind Pavilion booth on Tuesday, June 5.

Prior to coming to NMCC, Kilcollins worked for more than 25 years in electrical components manufacturing and related industries for companies such as Bell Labs, Control Devices, First Technology, and GE Wind Energy. Over the course of his career, his responsibilities have included research and development for underwater applications of fiber optic communication systems, design and development of electromechanical circuit protection devices, and training of electrical and maintenance technicians with troubleshooting of automated assembly equipment. He also has extensive experience with wind power technology, including wind turbine operations and maintenance.

“NMCC is fortunate to have an instructor of Wayne’s caliber and with his industry experience be a part of our faculty,” said Dr. Dorothy Martin, NMCC academic dean. “Wayne is very well respected by his peers in the wind power industry.”

Throughout his career, Kilcollins has played an active role in promoting workforce development through affiliation with organizations such as the American Wind Energy Association’s Education Working Group, Maine Wind Industry Initiative, and participation with the Maine Gubernatorial Renewable Energy Mission to Europe.

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Wayne Kilcollins