



April 11, 2013

News Release

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Northern Maine Community College Welcomes Wind Industry Leaders

Aroostook County - Wind industry leaders from throughout the state, representing Maine, national and global companies, received a personalized tour of the Northern Maine Community College Wind Lab to view the wind turbine recently installed for teaching purposes. Thursday's event also provided an opportunity for these specialized companies to see the various aspects of the wind power technology curriculum and meet the students who will soon be in the wind power work force.

NMCC's wind power technology program is the first-of-its-kind in New England. A private donation through the College Foundation provided funding for the turbine, which is the largest teaching tool in NMCC's 50-year history.

"Our wind power program is already a leader in New England, and this equipment is advancing the program, knowledge and skills of our students and their potential to be hired in the industry," according to NMCC President Tim Crowley.

The 18,000 pound, used 200 kW nacelle and rotor assembly was delivered to the wind lab last November; it had previously been operating in Denmark. The nacelle houses the generator and controls of a wind turbine responsible for its operation. By eliminating the tower and blades, the equipment fits into the wind power lab, where it has been mounted on a stand to simulate a tower. This also allows for year-round teaching in the nacelle without having to deal with weather and climbing issues.

"With this unit, students have the opportunity to observe and interact with a complete system, instead of just the sub-systems they experience on the current trainers. This gives them the perspective of a fully-functional system, so they can see how changing something makes it not work or work differently," explained wind power instructor Wayne Kilcollins.

During the open house, students demonstrated how the turbine operates in a lab setting and highlighted other parts of the lab. A number of wind power companies were awarded plaques acknowledging their assistance which has led to the success of the wind power program.

“Having this hands-on program at Northern Maine Community College is a tremendous asset to the wind power industry and of course for the future of these students, the wind power technicians of the future,” said Bruce Chapman of First Wind, LLC. “My company has offered internships to NMCC students and we’ve been pleased with their performance at our sites.”

Since its arrival on campus in November, students have been hard at work making it operationally ready. Wind power students took it apart, cleaned and replaced components as needed. Automotive collision repair students also got involved in the process, painting the exterior parts of the equipment.

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Northern Maine Community College wind power students demonstrate various training equipment for guests attending the Wind Power Open House on April 11. The feature of the tour and open house was the recently-acquired wind turbine, the largest teaching tool in the College’s 50-year history.



As part of the April 11 activities in the NMCC wind power lab, a number of businesses were recognized for their on-going support of the program. From helping to guide curriculum to meet industry needs, to donating equipment and resources, these businesses have played a role in the success of the NMCC wind power program. Accepting the awards were, front from left: Mike Ireland, Larkin Enterprises; Jay Piercy, GE Wind Energy; Virginia Joles, Maine Public Service; Jan Murchison, James W. Sewall Company; Jon Sacks and Mike Daigle, Cianbro Corporation. Back, from left: Leo Freeman, Perceptions of Aroostook; Bruce Chapman, First Wind, LLC; Gary Johnson (NMCC wind power alum) and John Fletcher, GE Wind Energy; Brett Hart, James W. Sewall Company; and James Hinkley, Vestas.



Also honored during the event were NMCC automotive collision repair instructor Bob Collins (holding plaque) and several of his students for the outstanding work they did refurbishing the housing of the used nacelle unit (displayed behind them).