



Press Release

NMCC Media Contact: Jason Parent 768-2808
MPS Media Contact: Virginia Joles 760-2418

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Maine Public Service announces \$10,000 contribution to support NMCC Wind Power Technology Program

Presque Isle - Northern Maine's electric utility company has committed \$10,000 to support the development of New England's first wind power technology program at Northern Maine Community College in Presque Isle. MPS board chair Richard Daigle was joined by his fellow board directors, MPS company officials and NMCC representatives in making that announcement today during a luncheon on the College campus.

"Wind power has great potential to be a leading economic driver in northern Maine and other parts of the state moving forward. The faculty, staff and administrators at Northern Maine Community College have demonstrated great foresight in laying the groundwork and developing the curriculum for this innovative new program. Maine Public Service Company is pleased to be the first of what we hope will be many organizations to make a financial contribution to support the wind power technology program at NMCC," said Daigle.

The announcement comes a week before the College launches its inaugural course offering in wind power, and as the institution prepares to welcome the first students enrolled in the new program this coming fall. To date, 28 prospective students from across the state have applied for admission to the wind power technology program.

"We are greatly appreciative of the support of Maine Public Service Company as we get this new program off the ground," said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. "MPS was an important player at the table as we first began discussions on wind power technology here at the College in 2007. Since that time, company officials have been instrumental in helping us get this program to the point we are at today. The wind power technology program will provide a valuable and needed resource for entities that erect wind turbines, as well as excellent placement opportunities for future graduates of the College."

As part of his remarks, Crowley also took a moment to introduce NMCC's newly hired wind power technology instructor, Wayne Kilcollins of Presque Isle, and two of the students who have been accepted to the program and are enrolled in Kilcollins' Wind Energy Theories course in the coming semester. Richard Flannery of Caribou and Steven Gray of Woodland are among the two dozen students signed up for the first course offering to train wind power technicians that will be held at NMCC on Tuesday evenings beginning January 13.

Wind power technicians are responsible for the operation, maintenance and repair of wind turbine generators. Prospective employers include wind farm owners/operators and turbine manufacturers who frequently contract with owner/operators to provide maintenance and support. Current entry level wages for a wind power technician are \$18 to \$22 per hour.

A report released last year by a task force assembled by Governor John Baldacci to consider issues of wind power development in Maine recommended that the state host two gigawatts of wind power by 2015 and three gigawatts by 2020. According to the U.S. Department of Energy's Job and Economic Development Impact model, to host two gigawatts of power by the targeted deadline, at least 180 field technicians, administrators and managers will be needed.

"We are very excited about the new wind power technology curriculum and look forward to our continued working relationship with faculty and staff at Northern Maine Community College as this program prepares to enroll its first students," said Maine Public Service Company President and CEO Brent M. Boyles. "Training wind operators and technicians to support renewable energy projects provides an excellent opportunity for students and for the new emerging businesses in our area. We are committed to the success of this important new program and are proud to join with NMCC to once again show that Aroostook County is leading the way in the development of alternative energy resources."

Currently, MPS has 1,250 megawatts of renewable energy interconnection requests and provides power transmission delivery for excess existing generation located in northern Maine including the 42 megawatt Mars Hill wind farm. Future projects have the potential to stimulate additional jobs, as well as research and development initiatives in renewable energy.

NMCC is ideally suited to provide wind power technology instruction. The College has existing programs in electrical construction and maintenance and computer electronics, two fields that serve as the foundations for the multi-disciplinary industry of wind power.

Demand in the electrical construction and maintenance program for this past fall prompted college officials to add an additional cohort of freshmen students. Enrollment in that associate degree program has risen by 18 percent over last fall.

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On hand to present the \$10,000 donation from Maine Public Service Company to support the new Wind Power Technology program at Northern Maine Community College were, from left: Brian Hamel, vice chair of the Maine Public Service Board of Directors; Brent Boyles, president/CEO of Maine Public Service; and Richard Daigle, chair of MPS Board of Directors. Receiving the donation were, from left, NMCC President Timothy Crowley and NMCC Foundation Board Chair Richard Engels.