



News Release

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NMCC's Kilcollins tapped to participate in Governor's renewable energy mission to Europe

Aroostook County - Wayne Kilcollins, wind power technology instructor at Northern Maine Community College, will be among the representatives from Maine participating in a Gubernatorial renewable energy mission to Spain and Germany on September 19 through 26.

The Maine International Trade Center organized trade mission will focus on the wind and ocean renewable power industries in Madrid/Zaragoza, Spain and Bremen, Germany. Kilcollins and other members of the delegation will participate in meetings with key energy industry contacts, including one on one meetings with potential partners, investors, and manufacturers. They will also visit to Wind Power Expo in Zaragoza, Spain's flagship wind farm operation center, and the offshore wind energy hub in Bremerhaven, Germany.

In addition, Kilcollins will visit with officials from a few colleges in the two European countries to discuss their role in training wind technicians and visit with some wind turbine manufacturers and wind park operators to see what their training requirements are for wind technicians coming out of college.

"I believe this is a great opportunity to network with other professionals in the wind industry. This is the way to see what is coming and position ourselves to better serve our students and the wind industry as a whole," said Kilcollins. "This is a great opportunity to present NMCC as a U.S. leader in wind power technician training."

Since joining the NMCC campus in January of 2009, to develop and lead the first wind power technology program in New England, Kilcollins has well-positioned the institution in the wind power community in the United States. The College is an active member of the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), and Kilcollins holds a seat on AWEA's education committee, which is currently undertaking an effort to develop a standardized wind technician skill set for college curriculum, Department of Labor definition and class code for a wind technician, and the national direction towards a wind technician board exam.

“We have exposure with AWEA and now have the opportunity to meet with equivalent organizations in Europe. Among my goals on this trip is to see how the NMCC wind power technician program aligns with similar programs at colleges in Europe,” said Kilcollins.

Spain and Germany, in addition to Denmark, are considered European leaders in both onshore and offshore wind projects. Both countries that will be visited as part of the Governor’s trade mission are home to companies with major investments in regional energy projects and are targets for future investment in the state, and rank first and third worldwide in installed wind power.

According to Kilcollins preliminary discussions with Spanish and German organizers indicate an interest in having a technical training center in the U.S. to assist European technicians with learning the English language as it relates to the wind industry. Several global companies send technicians to the U.S. for work with the English speaking counterparts to assist with assembly and warranty work.

“Most of these technicians have difficulty speaking English, so it is difficult for them to work with U.S. technicians in showing how the new systems function. These companies would like a training center that they can send their technicians to in order to learn English and also do some hands-on training with wind turbine components and systems. I believe this would be a great opportunity for NMCC,” said Kilcollins.

In addition to Kilcollins representing NMCC, Governor Baldacci will be joined on his seventh trade mission by representatives from a number of Maine companies involved in the growth of alternative energy in Maine, including Reed and Reed, Larkin Enterprises and Cianbro.

“This is not going to be a typical trade mission,” said Janine Bisailon-Cary, president of the Maine International Trade Center. “This is going to be a lot more targeted in terms of renewable energy and targeted in terms of wind.”

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Northern Maine Community College Wind Power Technology Instructor Wayne Kilcollins (left) works with student Craig Cyr in the Wind Power Technology lab at NMCC. In the coming week, Kilcollins will travel to Spain and Germany with Governor Baldacci and leaders in Maine's wind power industry on a renewable energy mission.