Grantee: Mesalands Community College, a member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

Industry Focus: Wind Energy

Key Partners: Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy, Sandia National Laboratories, New Mexico State University, New Mexico Workforce Development, New Mexico Department of Energy, New Mexico Department of Economic Development, Greater Tucumcari Economic Development Corporation and Regional Development Corporation, Clipper Windpower Development Company, enXco, Xcel Energy, General Electric, Mitsubishi, and Florida Power and Light

Grant Amount: $2,000,000

Leveraged Amount: $1,221,453

Location of Grant Activities: New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma

Challenge: A feasibility study developed for Mesalands Community College in 2005 by the Regional Development Corporation and the Idea Group of Santa Fe estimates that there are between 400 to 500 new wind energy technicians being hired annually in the United States. The study also concludes that there is a lack of prepared wind energy technicians. The industry is scrambling simply to meet current training requirements, not to mention the future demands of this evolving sector.

Addressing the Challenge: The grantee will acquire a Wind Power Turbine to provide a learning resource to new wind energy technicians, and a research tool to North American Wind Research and Training Center (NAWRTC) partners. This vital training tool will support NAWRTC curriculum. This curriculum is currently only offered by two other community colleges in the United States, and neither are within this southwest rural region, which contains a large portion of the country's wind turbines. Mesalands Community College will develop an aggressive outreach campaign within the region and work with Workforce Development Boards and local One-Stop Career Centers to assist interested workers in becoming involved with the program. Recruitment efforts will focus on existing operations and maintenance personnel, unemployed workers, the underemployed, high school students, minorities, women, and other potential workers. Customized training programs in Wind Power will develop a fast track training program that will prepare workers to develop the skills necessary to become employable by their firms. Part of the training will be at Mesalands Community College or on major wind farms. Additional training will be provided on the job with the support of NAWRTC partners.

Projected Outcomes:

- Train 1,285 participants in wind energy careers
- Acquisition of a 1.25 megawatt wind turbine
- Curriculum development and implementation for wind energy certificate programs