



HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## *News Release*

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# **Illinois Board of Higher Education Approves HCC Wind Tech Program**

FREEPORT, Ill. – April 1, 2008 – Highland Community College has been given official approval of the state's first associate degree program for wind turbine technicians. The program was developed through a partnership with EcoEnergy.

The members of the Illinois Board of Higher Education approved the program's curriculum with no changes at the organization's April 1 meeting. The College received approval by the Illinois Community College Board on January 28 and anticipates classes will begin in Fall 2008.

The two-year program will include courses in subjects including electronics, meteorology, math and even business, speech and physical education. Graduates from similar programs have typically found full-time jobs in the industry soon after graduation.

EcoEnergy President Shawn Gaffney is eager for the program to start. "More and more companies, including EcoEnergy, are working to bring clean, green wind energy facilities to the Midwest. As we develop and build wind energy facilities, the demand for well-trained turbine techs will keep increasing. We see that as another positive aspect of wind energy – more stable, reliable jobs for our communities."

EcoEnergy's role in the program doesn't stop at development. EcoEnergy staff will serve as instructors for some of the classes and the company plans to be a longtime partner in supporting the curriculum.

The wind turbine technician program has come together quickly thanks to the

efforts of HCC Dean of Business and Technology Scott Anderson, electronics instructor Steve Gellings and Dave Vrtol, Illinois wind project manager for EcoEnergy. “We started discussing the program in late spring 2007. With EcoEnergy’s help, we found a college in the state of Oregon that would share curriculum information, and we’ve been building on that information to create our own program,” Anderson said.

The initial capacity for the program is 16 students the first year, plus 16 new students in the second year for a total of 32 students. HCC plans to increase the program’s capacity to 48 students within three years.

Highland Community College offers more than 60 programs of applied and transfer degrees, community education and business training. In addition to comprehensive academic programming, Highland provides theatre, art and music opportunities for the community. Highland Community College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association’s Academic Quality Improvement Program. Located in Freeport and Elizabeth, Highland is conveniently positioned in the tri-state region with access to several major metropolitan areas. For more information about Highland Community College, visit [www.highland.edu](http://www.highland.edu).

EcoEnergy is an alternative energy solutions developer and a unit of the Morse Group, headquartered in Freeport. The Morse Group has been in business for more than 60 years and serves clients in the electrical, energy and construction markets across the United States. For more information on EcoEnergy, visit [www.EcoEnergyllc.com](http://www.EcoEnergyllc.com). For more information on wind energy, visit [www.ifnotwind.org](http://www.ifnotwind.org).

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