

## **Highland Opens New Wind Turbine Technician Training Center**

NAW Staff, Thursday 04 June 2009 - 15:54:22

The construction of Freeport, Ill.-based Highland Community College's (HCC) 5,500 square-foot Wind Turbine Technician Training Center is complete.

At a ribbon-cutting ceremony, officials formally opened the facility, which includes two dedicated classrooms, a hydraulics lab and a large training shop that will house the equipment, components and tools needed to complete wind turbine technician training.

In addition, students will have the opportunity to work on components of a turbine nacelle indoors and on ground level.

The Wind Turbine Technician program was developed in cooperation with Elgin, Ill.-based based EcoEnergy, which provided assistance in developing curriculum and providing staff to serve as instructors for several classes.

"Wind energy is the fastest-growing segment of the energy industry today," says Shawn Gaffney, president of EcoEnergy. "As more wind energy facilities are developed, the need for qualified turbine techs will increase. We see that as another positive aspect of wind energy – more stable, reliable jobs for our communities."

The new center is has been fitted with specialized tools through a partnership with Rockford, Kan.-based Greenlee Textron Inc. Winter Construction of Freeport was the general contractor, and R.L. Johnson and Associates was the architect for this project.

HCC continues to pursue partnerships with companies in the wind energy industry to raise funds to cover the entire cost needed to construct the facility. Public funds were not available, and the state cannot project when funding will again be possible for capital projects of this nature, according to HCC.

Interim financing has been made possible in part by local banks including Amcore, Citizens State Bank, First State Bank Shannon/Polo and Foresight Financial Group (including German American Bank, Lena State Bank, Northwest Bank of Rockford, State Bank and State Bank of Davis).

SOURCE: Highland Community College