

Renewable Energy Marketplace – Alliance for Talent Development Announces WIRED Talent Development Awards

Marshall, MN--The Renewable Energy Marketplace – Alliance for Talent Development (MNREM) today awarded \$2.5 million to 16 area partnerships proposing innovative talent development solutions for the renewable energy industry in the 36-county MNREM region.

The WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) initiative is a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, to foster new partnerships and ways of delivering education and training to enhance the region's talent development system.

"Minnesota has always been a leader in renewable energy innovation," said Mark Willers, MNREM board chair. "With these MNREM investments, we make it possible for our renewable industries and our state to grow and adapt more quickly to our changing world."

This is the first set of awards through the Renewable Energy Marketplace to support talent development, entrepreneurship and business growth, and regional leadership and identity. The projects funded through these awards represent a step toward building the strong and proactive talent development system that the renewable energy industry needs to stay competitive.

The awards support industry-led partnerships that will transform key elements of the talent in the region. The list of awardees is organized by region; however, many of them cover a much larger geographic area.

Northwest/West Central awardees include:

- \$170,060 to Solar Skies Mfg LLC/Alexandria Technical College for curriculum development and incumbent worker training for solar energy;
- \$51,267 to StoneL Corporation, Better Through Design, 3M/Tri-State Manufacturer's Association to support the Dream It. Do It. Campaign in west central Minnesota;
- \$202,500 to BTD, Inc., Lake Region Electrical Coop, Ottertail Power and others/Minnesota State Community and Technical College for development of three technical skills certificates for core skills in energy/manufacturing, and the development of alternative energy learning units;
- \$168,778 to Lake Region Electric Cooperative, Ottertail Power Corporation/Lake Country Service Cooperative to offer a STEM teacher academy, and teacher mentorship with local industries;
- \$174,258 to Nova-Tech Engineering; Hammel, Green and Abrahamson/University of Minnesota, Morris to develop and implement a biomass gasification technology curriculum.

Southwest:

- \$118,222 to Outland Energy, Granite Falls Energy, Fagen Engineering, and others/Minnesota West Community and Technical College for teacher training in STEM and renewable energy;

- \$202,500 to the SMI & Hydraulics, Solar Skies, Empire Plumbing and Heating, and others/Southwest Initiative Foundation to expand the YES! Program in the MNREM region;
- \$202,500 to Xcel Energy, BH Electronics, and others/Southwest FIRST Collaborative for development and dissemination of career information and pathways in renewable energy, and to expand access to college-level programs in energy production;
- \$100,000 to SMI & Hydraulics, Global Wind Harvest, and others/Minnesota West Community and Technical College for a wind energy development coordinator;
- \$202,500 to Heron Lake BioEnergy and others/Minnesota West Community and Technical College for development of an ethanol process simulator manual, and supervisory management training, production operation/lab training in the biofuels industry;
- \$202,500 to Nova-Tech Engineering, EpiTopix/MinnWest Technology Campus for development of a learning center; and to provide internships and opportunities for students to gain experience in renewable fuels and other bioscience fields in a real-world atmosphere;
- \$80,307 to Chippewa Valley Ethanol/Benson Public School to develop a table-top ethanol production facility for operation in the Benson school; and to offer students science experience in renewable energy;

South Central/Southeast:

- \$202,500 to Alliant Energy, Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services/Workforce Development, Inc. to increase renewable energy curriculum for high school teachers, renewable energy internships, pre-employment energy academies, and tuition assistance for the renewable energy technician program;
- \$169,065 to Wilcon Construction, Schwickert's, Paulsen and others/Minnesota State University, Mankato for curriculum development and delivery to prepare technicians and engineers for design and implementation of energy-efficient mechanical systems;
- \$85,935 to Easy Energy Systems, Inc., /Martin County West School, to provide internships and career exploration opportunities to students in renewable energy;
- \$174,939 to Cambria, Dotson Iron Castings, and others/South Central College to develop curriculum in four core mechatronics areas; and to create a Shared Work pilot program to offer mechatronics;

About WIRED

WIRED is a federal initiative designed to energize the nation's economy through regional economic development partnerships and workforce education and training. The Renewable Energy Marketplace of southern and western Minnesota is one of 39 areas across the United States participating in the WIRED initiative. Background on the MNREM WIRED Initiative can be found at: www.mnrem.org. For details on the national WIRED program, visit www.doleta.gov.