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WIND ENERGY APPRENTICESHIP PLANNED FOR BC

Significant Future Demand for Skilled Workers Projected

Langley, BC – The growing BC wind power industry is moving toward the development of an apprenticeship training program for certified Wind Turbine Technicians. A consultation Resource Training Organization (RTO) conducted during 2009 indicated the need for a provincial training program to meet future demand for skilled workers in this industry. It is anticipated that a Wind Turbine Technician apprenticeship training program will be launched by 2011/12 to meet the increasing demand for skilled employees who service and maintain wind turbines across the province.

With a surge in demand for green energy alternatives, the industry projects significant wind farm development activity over the next five years and beyond. It is also predicted that the pace of growth in “green jobs” will outstrip the growth rate of traditional jobs in Canada by a ratio of 2 to 1. Skilled trades, such as Wind Turbine Technician, are almost certain to reap the biggest gains as new green initiatives in sustainable energy and construction get underway across North America.

BC’s first operating wind turbine was recently connected to the electrical grid at Bear Mountain near Dawson Creek. Several companies such as Aelois Wind, GE, Naikun Wind Development, Peace Energy Cooperative, Epcor, and Vestas Americas are in the planning or development stages for the commissioning of several hundred wind turbines over the next 5-10 years.

The proposed Wind Turbine Technician training program will help address the demand for skilled technicians to install and maintain wind turbines and support wind farm operations across the province. The Canadian Wind Energy Association projects a significant increase in demand for Wind Turbine Technicians (Mechanical) and Wind Turbine Technicians (Electrical and Systems). It is estimated that 1 Wind Turbine Technician is needed per 10 turbines, and for some farms the ratio is 1 technician to 6 to 8 turbines.

The importance of the development of the new trades training program for the province is well understood and industry has played an important role in planning for the program’s development. Industry stakeholders including 10 energy companies, Northern Lights College, the Resource Training Organization, and the Industry Training Authority of BC, are participating in planning for the program and will continue to be actively involved in its development.

RTO, established in 2007, which has the responsibility for the implementation, development and maintenance of apprenticeship training for the Province’s resource sector, will be securing funding to complete an occupational analysis and program design for BC’s first Wind Turbine Technician industry training program.

- 30 -

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