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Federal stimulus grant funds for 'Green Jobs' Training coming to Clackamas County

OREGON CITY – The Workforce Investment Council of Clackamas County (WICCO) will receive \$483,000 as part of a Department of Labor grant awarded to Oregon Manufacturing Partnership (OMEP). The grant, one of 25 awarded nationally, will preserve and create over 1,700 jobs in renewable energy industries throughout the Portland-Salem-Vancouver economic region consisting of nine counties in Oregon and Washington, according to Kim Parker, WICCO Executive Director.

The project, titled Renewable Northwest (ReNW), is authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). This funding will help build a skilled workforce to support companies that generate power and local manufacturers who produce products that support the industry, notes Parker. Clackamas Community College will be awarded the training funds for existing, industry-identified training; analyzing skills and production requirements of potential suppliers to the industries; and training existing workers to meet changing needs of their companies pertaining to renewable energy. It is expected that 175 individuals in Clackamas County will benefit from these opportunities.

In the metro area, 37 companies have expressed interest in participating in the ReNW project including local employers PCC Structurals and Miles Fiberglass. Training will begin this spring, with participants given the opportunity to earn certificates and degrees meeting industry and state-defined standards. Simultaneously, OMEP will conduct an analysis of skills and production requirements of the renewable energy industry. Local companies will be identified and offered employee training to develop and manufacture new project lines to support these companies.

“This is a terrific opportunity to support the renewable energy industry in Oregon,” comments Parker. “The increased focus on clean energy and all things ‘green’ will help pull Oregon out of the recession, with Clackamas County a major leader in this goal.”

Other partners include Sheet Metal Workers Local 16, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Dist. No 24, Northwest Oregon Labor Council, Energy Trust of Oregon, Enterprise for Employment and Education, Worksystems, Inc., SW Washington Workforce Development Council, the Washington Manufacturing Service, the Oregon/Washington bi-state WorkSource system, and six community colleges and economic development partners from throughout the region including Clackamas Community College.

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ABOUT WICCO

The Workforce Investment Council of Clackamas County (WICCO) is a nonprofit organization whose sole purpose is to serve as an advocate for businesses in workforce development within Clackamas County and the State of Oregon. The mission of WICCO is to develop a highly skilled workforce that creates sustained economic prosperity in Clackamas County. Since 2004, WICCO has invested over \$20 million in the workforce system of Clackamas County for youths, adults and displaced workers. For the fiscal year ending June 2009, WICCO assisted over 7,000 adults to receive services funded by the Workforce Investment Act through WorkSource Clackamas. A total of 258 adults received training, plus an additional 672 youth enrolled and received follow-up services. During this period, over 20,000 visitors received services at WorkSource Clackamas, an unprecedented historical number.