

Business **Outlook**



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SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

Fuel and security hurt the carrier's bottom line

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Mother of Invention

How a Santa Fe woman made the back-seat caddy she couldn't buy

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By **ANDREW WEBB**
Journal Staff Writer

After fruitlessly searching for a way to safely keep her kids' things within their reach in the back seat of the family minivan, Dawn Winters-Rizika of Santa Fe did what a lot of us have probably done. She thought to herself, "I could make something like that."

The steps she took next could likely mean the difference between an actual product and the all-too-common fate of so many useful inventions left cooling on the cranial backburner.

A year's worth of support from a network of local nonprofits, two trade shows and about \$45,000 in home equity loans later, a shipment of about 1,500 Kids Consoles is expected to arrive from China this month.

From her distribution center — which also doubles as the family garage — Winters-Rizika hopes to begin sending plastic Kids Consoles to a waiting list of retailers, ranging from parenting supply

See **MOTHER** on **PAGE 6**

Sadie, 5, demonstrates the Kids Console, which her mother, Dawn Winters-Rizika, invented.



COURTESY BABY AZUL INC.

College seeks \$12M for wind courses

■ *Mesalands in Tucumcari has some money in hand and is going to the Roundhouse*

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By **ANDREW WEBB**
Journal Staff Writer

Now with fresh startup funding in hand, backers of a proposed eastern New Mexico wind energy degree program hope the Legislature will blow a little more cash their way.

Mesalands Community College, in Tucumcari, envisions the North

American Wind Research and Training Center as a linchpin in the fast-growing regional energy sector.

In the year since a \$12 million capital outlay request failed in the 2006 Legislature, Mesalands has secured \$2 million in work-force development funds from the Department of Labor, developed strategic research relationships with New Mexico State University and Sandia National Laboratories, and hammered out details of degree and certificate programs in the building and



See **COLLEGE** on **PAGE 2**

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Staff

Business Editor Michael Murphy, 823-3830
Assistant Business Editor Autumn Gray, 823-3962
Reporters
Rory McClannahan: West Side/Rio Rancho, 823-3835
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Winthrop Quigley: Health Care/Insurance, 823-3896
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Editorial Assistant
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Copy Editors Jean Tierney
Designer Donella Danielson
Business Dept. Fax 823-3994
Advertising 823-3311

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"Let me put it this way, Roy. If you were an e-mail, I'd delete you."

College seeks \$12M for wind-energy center

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maintaining of wind energy farms.
This year, the tiny community college aims to revisit the Roundhouse for up to \$12 million to buy and erect a utility-scale wind turbine and build a 65,000-square-foot classroom and research building.

Jim Morgan, Mesalands director of technology, says the college's discussions with wind farm operators, such as a recent American Wind Energy Association convention in Denver, have indicated tremendous need for trained employees in the sparsely populated areas where wind is harnessed. Tucumcari is near three wind farms, including a 80-megawatt wind farm supplying power to Xcel Energy and a 40-megawatt farm generating power for PNM.

"A lot of the techs they're getting now are youngsters who developed their skills on farm equipment," he said. "Some of them are very talented, and able to go forward in management, but have no degree. We have a lot of support from current wind farm operators."

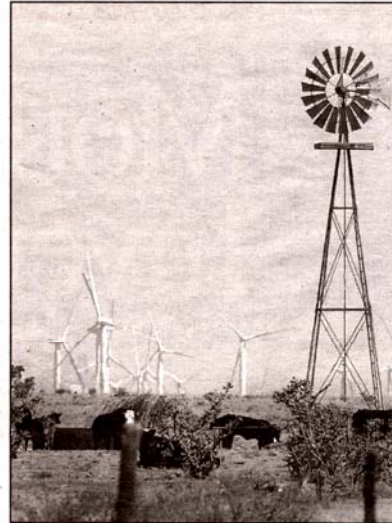
Christine Rael de Azua, a spokeswoman for the American Wind Energy Association, said for the last two years, wind energy was the fastest growing source of electricity behind natural gas for new power plants.

"This is an industry that is definitely hiring," she said. "It's growing by leaps and bounds."

She said only a handful of community colleges and universities, such as Iowa Lakes Community College in the rural northwest part of that state, offer dedicated programs to train the technicians, builders, financiers and utilities experts needed to build and operate a wind farm.

"If you come equipped with that kind of degree, you'll be finding a job," she said.

About \$750,000 of the Department of Labor's \$2 million grant is set aside toward the purchase of a wind turbine, which Morgan estimates could cost more



JOURNAL FILE
This farm windmill and these wind power turbines are at the wind ranch at House, N.M., not far from Tucumcari and Mesalands Community College. Eastern New Mexico has reliable wind.

than \$2.2 million. The rest is to be used to start the program and cover its early operating costs.

Morgan said the turbine would be hooked into the local electricity grid and would sell power to Xcel when it wasn't being used for research or training.

He said Mesalands will ask Gov. Bill Richardson for \$2 million in capital outlay for the turbine, and legislators for at least \$6 million to help start construction of the building. He estimates the college will eventually need at least \$12 million for the entire project.

Mesalands, which has about 800 students at any given time, is known for several unusual offerings, including farrier science and bronze sculpture programs, and one of the country's only two-year degrees in paleontology — the study of fossils and extinct organisms, such as dinosaurs.

Wind curriculum

The proposed North American Wind Energy Research Center at Mesalands Community College would offer three programs:

- A five-day seminar for employers who want to hone their employees' skills;
- An eight-week certification course on the basics of wind energy, including hydraulics, mechanics and wind farm safety; and
- A two-year associate's degree in wind energy.