



## News Release

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### First Wind Technology classes filled to capacity at Mesalands

When Mesalands Community College administrators set out to offer a Wind Energy Technology Program they calculated that a class of 30 students would be the best scenario. As the program got off the ground, a national promotion was launched and students were invited to enroll. The start was a slow one that, early in the enrollment time, caused some apprehension. However, excitement soon became the emotion of the day when it became clear that there would be enough students to make the class, and then some. Enrollment finally topped at 32 students in the program as classes started on August 25, 2008.

Although the majority of the students came from all over the state of New Mexico, some traveled from places like Arizona, California, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, New York, Kansas, and Texas.

Chris Ward came to Mesalands from Niskayuna, New York to make a career change and get a start in the wind energy industry.

“I was selling mortgages when the bottom fell out in that industry,” said Ward. “And when I saw that G.E. promised to hire graduates of the Mesalands Wind Energy Technology Program, I decided that this was the place to be.”

Travis Lee of Muscatine, Iowa was impressed in how well thought out the curriculum and the Wind Program is at Mesalands, and the presence of a full-scale, operational turbine on campus was a big plus for him. He is also making a career change from maintenance work and tool making to Wind Energy Technician.

“Before you do anything else in working on turbines you need good safety training, and that is what we are learning first thing,” said Lee.

Students enrolled in this first semester of classes will get a valuable bonus over later enrollees. They will be able to observe the construction of the College’s 1.5 Megawatt turbine, being installed just yards from their classroom. The turbine, dubbed “The Tallest Classroom in the World,” is a commercial capacity unit manufactured by General Electric that has education and training as its primary purpose.

“The turbine will generate enough electricity to light up 400 homes, and it will be connected to the grid,” said Jim Morgan, Director of Technology at Mesalands.

“But it will be shut down whenever there is a need to train the students and have the blades be stationary.”

“We are excited about this new program at Mesalands and the bright future it promises to those who complete the two-year program successfully,” said Wind Energy Technology Director/Instructor Tracy Rascoe. He brings years of actual experience in the wind industry to the table, having worked in maintenance, management, and as a trainer prior to joining the faculty at Mesalands.

Meanwhile, construction has started on campus with excavation and the construction of the footings and foundation for the turbine tower the first order of business. Plans are to have the turbine producing power on the grid by early November, 2008.



Wind Energy Technology Director/Instructor, Tracy Rascoe tells his class about the importance of safety in the work place, as Mesalands Community College’s Wind Energy Technology Program gets off to a solid start.