# Wind technology blows thru campus

**By John Hurlburt**
Co-Editor in Chief

Hidden three miles in from Oregon's scenic Columbia River Gorge, more than 250 wind turbines capture the power of truly renewable energy and create a skyline that would make Don Quixote's courage dissolve.

The wind turbines are a part of Portland General Electric's Biglow Canyon Wind Farm, a site where future students going through Columbia Gorge Community College's Renewable Energy Technology program will be trained.

Due to a partnership forged between Clackamas Community College and CGCC, students can take the first year of classes in order to get a Renewable Energies Technologies degree with a focus on wind technologies at CCC before drifting to Columbia Gorge to finish their training and joining Oregon's exploding green industry.

The pay for a trained technician starts at about $18 to $20 in the field, a fortune to someone fresh out of high school and more than many people can hope for even after receiving a four-year degree. Dale Coyle, Biglow Canyon plant manager, reminds, however, there are some strings attached to making the pay. Most importantly is technicians cannot be afraid of heights.

Soon students will go out to the Biglow site early in the training in so that they can scale the energy creating monoliths. Experiencing this early on is important for new students, according to Coyle.

"It'd be wrong to go through two years of college and then get out here and try to climb a tower and realize you're scared of towers, scared of heights and not want to do the job," Coyle said.

Climb training at Biglow will start once liability issues have been sorted out because regardless of how safe the turbines are, there will always be an element of danger surrounding them.

Currently at Coyle's site, there have not been any accidents in the three years it has been running; however, at a nearby site named Klondike, a worker fell to his death from a turbine in August 2007, becoming the first and only employee killed working on a turbine in Oregon.

In the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration report on the accident, it was found that those working in the tower were not properly instructed or supervised for the operations they were performing, and they had not been properly trained in how to escape from "the hub," the top part of the tower containing the equipment to harness wind and convert it into electricity.

The report went on to state that nothing was structurally wrong with the tower and it would not have fallen if it would have been operated correctly.

Those who are afraid of heights aren't the only people who would have a hard time working on towers; claustrophobes can toss their applications into the trash as well.

Work conditions are tight. In order to get to the top of the tower, technicians are required to climb ladders up the entire height of the tower in an area not wide enough to stretch his or her arms.

The light purr produced by a turbine farm is reminiscent of the sound a bee makes in the distance. Even standing under the 84 meter giants, one doesn't here more than a whisper, unless the day happens to be savage and cruel.

During the winter the turbines can turn into catapults. Chunks of ice accumulated on the blades up to four pounds can be hurled off when the wind blows hard enough turning the farm into a potential hot zone of iced artillery.

Hard hats must be worn on site at all times because the white behemoths may forge clean, renewable energy, but they demand respect.

For every 8 to 10 power creating giants, there is one technician constantly servicing his wind turbines, making sure they continue work too safely and support electricity for over 100 houses. The constant maintenance explains why no creaks escape from any poorly lubricated friction points.

A quiet operation is important when 141 turbines, with the smallest blades at 83 meters, are spinning simultaneously. Currently these turbines are providing six or seven percent of PGE's electrical output, but by 2025 the company plans to have 25 percent of its power coming from renewable energy.

The money for creating the turbines comes to consumers in the form of utility bills.

Scott Giltz, dean of Clackamas' technical career education division, says it's a good opportunity, for those who can deal with the job

"It's a big emerging field, with something like 600 jobs projected over the next [illegible] years," Giltz said about the energy industry adding, "that's in Oregon."

Giltz was one of the movers shakers that have made the partnership with CGCC possible, and is currently one of the individuals working to get Clackamas' Renewable Energy Technology Degree, which is currently approved by the state of Oregon.

To Giltz the [illegible] of renewable energy is extremely important because he sees the future desperately needing to be a greener place.

"We've got to start using as much energy as we do and stop using natural resources. That's where this technology comes in," Giltz commented. "This kind of technology is really exciting and essential, absolutely essential.


Photo illustration by Emily Vaterlaus and John Hurlburt *Clackamas Print*

Janet Grosz *Clackamas Print*

The hoop house has vegetable rows named after native tribes in Oregon. The produce grows through the winter with no heating source.

# Eat your way into organic food at Farmer-Chef Connection

**By Abigail Neet**
News Editor

Clackamas Community College is co-hosting Farmer-Chef Connection 2010.

This will be the second year for the event to be held at CCC and the 10th year overall.

According to Elizabeth Howley, department chair for horticulture, the Farmer-Chef Connection is a great way for farmers and chefs to network.

Farmer-Chef Connection is on Monday, March 8 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Gregory Forum.

"It is pretty amazing," Howley said. "It's a great opportunity for those who love to grow food to get together with stores and chefs."

Howley said stores such as a New Seasons come to the event to purchase food. New Seasons also has a chef come, too.

There are workshops for farmers and chefs as well as farmer and chef speed dating.

Howley explained that farmers bring in their best food and the chefs cook it.

Horticulture student Karyn Bassett went to last year's Farmer-Chef Connection as a student volunteer and food consumer and said the event was very successful.

"It was worth it just for the food," Basset said. "The lunch is amazing."

Howley agreed that the food was probably the best she had had all year.

The food is brought by farmers and prepared by chefs.

Basset also noticed that it was a good way for people to make connections.

Bruce Nelson, a horticulture instructor, said he has seen a change in what is wanted from the program as more and more students are interested in food production.

"We are struggling with it internally," he said, of how to accommodate the demand and give people job skills.

Nelson believes it has a lot to do with current times and people wanting to farm and buy locally. Nelson goes with the nationwide interest.

Nelson agreed that Farmer-Chef Connection is a good way for chefs meet local growers.

There are 56 horticulture [illegible] covering a variety of material, [illegible] from organic farming to pest management and landscaping. Nelson said that although there are not too many food production classes, there is a lot of overlap. For example farmers learn a lot from pest management classes.

Nelson, himself, teaches an organic gardening class which goes over soil prep, tools to use, organic materials, cold weather procedures and when to plant.

The college was donated a greenhouse, which is basically a greenhouse to garden through the winter that Howley's class takes care of. The hoop house uses no heating and has successful plant growth.

Nelson said it is used to educate students on the possibilities of farming through the winter.


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