



THE GENERATOR

THE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY

WINTER 2007

Vol. 1 No 2

IN THIS ISSUE

- Rep. Brian Baird visits the COE to support new energy initiatives 1
- IBEW Local 77 support..... 2
- Skills Panel bill..... 2
- New COE Advisory Board Leadership..... 2
- Director's message..... 3
- Training Center plans continue.... 3
- Wenatchee Valley College energy program comes to life 4
- Student perspective..... 5
- PSE leadership support..... 5
- Labor looks at Satsop..... 6

U.S. Rep. Brian Baird praises Center of Excellence and the partnerships that keep it going strong

Congressman Brian Baird (D-WA) is the most recent national-level official to offer his unbridled support for the Centralia College Center of Excellence for Energy Technology. In a recent visit, Baird met with college officials, Energy Technology staff, and students in the high-visibility energy programs.

Joining Baird for brief talks prior to the meeting were Centralia College president Dr. Jim Walton, Center of Excellence Director Barbara Hins-Turner, vice president for Instruction John Martens, Dean of technical/vocational training Steve Miller, and Bob Guenther, IBEW labor lobbyist. Rep. Baird was quick to praise the college's work in energy training, which is setting a precedent around the country.

Walton began the meeting with students, energy industry workers, and college faculty by thanking Baird for his help in getting funding for the program and Energy Technology student scholarships. Students, workers, and staff then outlined the pressing need for energy technology training.

"We need these students to keep the lights on," said Glenn Phelps, the former Florida Power & Light plant operator for 30 years, whose classroom was being used to hold the meeting. "It has to be here," Phelps added, looking around the specialized instructional setting. "The energy industry can no longer train their own people fast enough to meet the growing demand."

Hins-Turner told the Congressman that seven of the eight students who finished courses at the end of last year already had jobs. Since that meeting other hires have landed positions at Grand Coulee dam's powerhouse, PSE, and Chehalis Power. This year, when the next class will move into the workforce, the number of qualified energy technology graduates will jump to about 20. Hins-Turner said several thousand spots will open up in energy technology over the next 8-10 years, and an energy technology training program such as that being sponsored by the Center of Excellence will need to expand into a dozen or more colleges to meet regional power production training needs in the near future.



U.S. Rep. Brian Baird, left, meets to discuss the Satsop campus potential with Barbara Hins-Turner, COE executive director, and Dr. Jim Walton, president of Centralia College.

Baird counseled the group to seek more details on the need for future expansion and to look at the instructional equipment and facilities needed to complete the region-wide training initiative. That, Baird said, allows congressional supporters to find available money and explain how it will be spent. "We can tell them, 'You're the missing piece, but not the entire puzzle,'" Baird said.

Baird reserved his highest praise for the way the COE for Energy Technology has put together partnerships to get the project started and to keep it energized. "I really think this is a model," Baird explained. "When you have industry, education, community, and organized labor working together to meet a critical need, it's not an abstract concept. It's something we can do and need to do. We need those skilled workers."

Energy Summit 2007
June 21 & 22

Join us to hear industry and labor leaders speak out on regional economic development initiatives, renewable energy projects, and workforce development solutions during the 2007 June Energy Summit. The Summit will begin at the Satsop campus, near Elma, WA., and conclude on the second day and features the high school Energy program at the New Market Skills Center in Tumwater.

For a complete outline and agenda, please call Cindy Mann at the COE, at (360) 736-9391, ext. 280 or e-mail: cmann@centralia.edu.

