



**Spring Advisory Board Meeting Minutes (TAC 331 and Virtual*)
May 17, 2024**

Members Present

Alice Massara, Chair, Tacoma Power
Bob Guenther, Organized Labor Rep.
Brian Young, WA Dept. Of Commerce*
Christine Reid, IBEW 77
Dan Kay, Wahkiakum PUD*
Erik McCoy, Puget Sound Energy
Jeremy Gall, Avista*
Kate McAteer, WSU Tri-Cities*
ML Norton, Centralia City Light
Nicole Schwall, Lewis County PUD
Rob Cowin, Fortescue*
Sarah Giomi, Energy Northwest*
Travis Kinney, Lewis County PUD

Members Absent

Aman Gill, Centralia College Faculty
Betsy Lazo, Centralia College Dean
Brian Odell, Chelan County PUD
Christina Chestnut, Thurston County Chamber of
Commerce/Worksource
Court Stanley, Centralia College Trustee
David Fortney, Portland General Electric
Jason Selwitz, WSU Energy Program
Joe Clark, Lewis County Transit
PJ LeCompte, Bonneville Power Administration
Richard Debolt, Economic Alliance of Lewis County
Rulon Crawford, Centralia College Faculty
Steve Marshall, CATES

Ex Officio

Monica Brummer, CoE Director
John Steidel, Centralia College Faculty
Jim Lowery, Centralia College Trustee, retired
Connie Smejkal, Centralia College VP of Instruction

Minutes Recorder

Emily Girt, CoE Program Coordinator

11:00

Welcome & Introductions

When you think about clean energy and clean technology – what are you (or your organization) most interested in learning?

- Alice Massara, Tacoma Power: particularly interested in green jobs. One speaker at a conference said that all jobs are green jobs- use/production of hydropower. One speaker said that hydropower is not renewable and is against it. Do you think that hydropower needs to go away and we should just focus on intermittents? What do you want us to use as our base load?
- Bob Guenther, Organized Labor: we don't have enough energy on the west side of WA, need a way to transmit across the Cascades. April 13th letter to legislature classifies hydropower as renewable energy. We have to figure out how we are going to produce enough power to support electrolyzers to fulfill our hydrogen projects. Gary is willing to build 300MW of solar on the east side right now but how do we get it here?

- Jim Lowery, CC Foundation Board member: there's a lot of work going on with battery technology and there will be many changes and ideas we may not have even thought of yet. As a hunter and fisherman, I am very concerned with what is happening in our environment right now.
- Connie Smejkal, Centralia College VP: I'm here to learn.
- Nicole Schwall, Lewis County PUD: mostly looking at labor trends, employees, and transitions in the market.
- Travis Kinney, Lewis County PUD: former student here at CC. How are all of these pieces going to fit together- the Lower Snake River dams being removed, EV charging, increases in electrification.
- Erik McCoy, Operations training team at PSE: with adding new clean technologies, we are expecting more from the same number of people as before. Balancing the changes and maintenance needed for these new technologies is difficult.
- John Steidel, Centralia College Faculty: started teaching PPO program here in 2007. Energy production & distribution- energy is necessary. Teaching students to operate and maintain equipment in a safe and efficient manner.
- ML Norton, Centralia City Light: on Columbia Generating station board. I'm concerned about math. Engineers can do math but not the legislature who are making the laws. There is a reality to making power to match the load without blackouts- especially during peak load times, like the third day of a Canadian cold snap- when there is typically no solar, no wind. Electrifying transportation is also a big contributor.
 - Bob comment: There is still time to put gas on Unit 2 at TransAlta, it would take about 13 weeks to convert it.
 - ML comment: Also taking natural gas out of heating homes will add to the load
- Jeremy Gall, Avista: a big focus for the future regarding clean energy is having a robust supply of availability. The demand can quickly outrun supply right now. Data storage and AI are also adding to demand. Building transmission lines is a 10-year process to move energy from where it is being generated to where it will be used. Threats of wildfire, particularly in our area, plays a big role in planning, costs, and what does a shared energy economy look like to distribute energy resources. Also need to make sure energy is still affordable- things are not going to pencil out for consumers with the costs associated with building new generation.
- Kate McAteer, WSU Tri-Cities Chancellor: I want to learn more about everything everyone has been talking about. Went to a workforce roundtable last week with participants from all areas. Once the hydrogen hub starts to emerge- how can we in higher education assist with apprenticeship readiness programs? People are starting to ask where their power and water are coming from. Not one group is going to solve this so we need to bring people together.
- Rob Cowin, Fortescue: Jeremy took all my points and Bob before him. We are at the mercy of the BPA system. Hydrogen is a tricky molecule to transport. The cost is the make or break on if you can produce green hydrogen. There's no way around this tricky

situation and no easy choices. Permitting, communities, aggressive goals- need more creative thinking. Need to accelerate and stick to the science.

- Dan Kay, Wahkiakum PUD: everybody is sitting on a lot of good points. We forget about the fundamentals and making it real. What are we going to do to keep the lights on and water flowing? Last week met with a BPA administrator- BPA decisions are made based on sound principles and not just cash only, focusing on infrastructure is an important principle. Low-income assistance and who is going to pay for it. There are a lot of extra costs that will come about. Wahkiakum is one of the smallest PUDs in the state and really have to spread the funds around.
- Brian Young, Department of Commerce: economic development for clean tech sector. Trying to find new opportunities in spaces like aviation fuel. Generation and transmission are also big issues. Coal has to go but other generation is allowed (80% clean on WA grid), can be done without carbon pollution. It is a time for change.
- Sarah Giomi, Energy Northwest: always working through a couple things. Generation (solar, wind) and transmission. Members, work with them closely for wildfire mitigation and getting power to communities who do not have it yet.
- Christine Reid, IBEW: focused on workforce. Projections to maintain what they have and what they will need. Secured funding to promote a study and identify high-voltage needs for the workforce with union representation in 2024.

Agenda Overview

Alice: We are going to take our time today to hear all of the updates Monica has, talk about the board charter, and discuss more about what everyone brought up.

Fall Meeting Minutes (November 2023)

Action: Approved

11:30 CoE Update, Monica

- State initiatives and opportunities, deadlines and grants, quick turnaround times drive a sense of urgency in the sector
- Goals and strategies review
- Advocacy & Partnership
 - Invited to a lot of meetings and conferences, emcee for RHA meeting last month

Industry & Education

- Governor visit & electric bus field trip to Lewis County Transit bump-charging station
- Dept of Energy: participated as cyber-OT grant grader, 7 different projects
- Enlighten women's forum (350 women attended)
- OCED visit at CC
- Building the Future Energy Workforce event (Group 14 and Sila Nanotechnologies)
 - Takeaway: they want to build the biggest battery manufacturing plant in the world but don't have the transmission needed. They will move if the issue isn't addressed.
- SEI Climate Corps Fellows hired- Building Efficiency and K-12
- Coming up:

- CHS Americas Conference
- RHA Conference
- SWW Energy/STEM Academy
- Hydrogen Hub announcement
- Green Transportation Expo
- CEWD National Workforce Conference

Partnerships

- Joining every board available to learn what everyone is doing
- CEWD Energy Fundamentals curriculum available, building stackable credentials
- Bill 1176- workforce advising group. Needs more business presence

Career awareness

- Enlighten Women's Forum: brought together women in construction and energy. Had a panel that included fusion, cleantech, labor and was energy focused. Women were asking about internships for fusion.
- Building the Future Energy Workforce: got to tour the labs, connect prospective applicants with employers, and gave the community more information about the battery manufacturers
- CCW- how do we support and promote career connected learning

Reports

- CETI report
- USEER report
- Lots of construction jobs will be needed as well as distribution/transmission, commercial HVAC, nuclear, residential shell.
- Being told by utilities that they are hiring outside technicians because linemen don't want to learn the new technology so the utilities are facing grievances from the unions. There is a need for training programs

SEI

- Fellows starting in June: Emily and Michael
- Building Efficiency Fellow will be working with Centralia City Light and Centralia College staff to do energy audits for Tier 1 buildings (buildings not in compliance will be fined) and will be job shadowing energy auditors to get more experience
- Fellows will be paid, gain experience, and get training
- This project has captured the attention of Commerce, and Commerce is applying for a grant that will place 60 fellows throughout the state housed at other colleges
- K-12 Fellow will work in the mobile lab and at the fair, helping with community outreach

Other work

- EV training for CTC faculty
- Energy Educators' Association
- FWEE: activity guide, STEM academy (brief review of schedule, for students 9-12 grade), sponsorship of hydrogen day and activity for all three academies. Would like to involve Centralia City Light and Lewis County Transit next year

REVIT

- Next steps- DACUM review

Accelerate the National Development of a Hydrogen Ready Workforce

- Phase 1 Funded, brings together several schools to build curriculum
- Accenture, PNNL, WA Dept of Commerce, Salt Lake Community College, University of Connecticut, Centralia College, PNCECE

Hydrogen Hub Training Center at CC

- We will be looking for an Operations Manager to help run the program, more equipment for the lab, and hire faculty

Coming up

- May: CHS
- June: RHA
- August: GTSE; CCW funding- if we include your projects (internships/apprenticeships/any kind of work-based learning) in our workplan and sector strategy update they are more likely to get funded
- October: Careers in Energy Week
- November: CEWD

12:40-12:55 Break

12:55 Lunch and CoE business- lunch time share and action item

Discussion items: Hydrogen Hub, transmission over the Cascades, biofuel- timber

1:05 CoE SBCTC Workplan/Advisory Board Charter

Advisory Board Charter update and review.

Action: Approved

Member's three-year term starts today.

1:10 Utility in a Box conversation

How do we promote careers in energy? Age group, focus, activities?

An idea that we have a box to give out that has some fliers and items to help teach awareness of careers in energy. What do you need to make your job easier?

- Jeremy: this may have come from a conversation we had. Maybe make this useful to teachers and schools because we can't get everywhere all the time and the more we get out and talk to the schools the more requests we get.
 - Christine: in regard to your outreach to the schools, do you reach out to counselors as well as students to help direct kids who may be a good fit for careers in energy?
 - Jeremy: we typically connect with the CTE teachers and directors and reach out to students. Would like to hold an event for teachers to get together and learn about energy.
- Alice: we work with OSPI to provide training with teachers and part of what they do is design/ build curriculum. We would be happy to share that with you.
- Monica: is this a topic that we should form a small committee to work on? Or is it best to hold conversations offline or bring it up in the spring?
- Jim: this isn't a new issue. Back when we were doing the WIRE grant, as workers were getting older, they realized they needed to inform students of their opportunities. I was

tasked with putting together a video of different careers and we hired a media company out of Portland to film it.

- Monica: we could gather other videos too.
- Alice: rather than a utility, what if we did clean energy? Make it broader rather than specific to utilities.
 - Jeremy: that's a great idea, and make it hands on and engaging for students in middle school, and establish people being able to see themselves in the job.
- Nicole: Onalaska recently did a hands-on career fair that was really engaging for the kids and got a lot of attention. Maybe that is something we could do at Centralia College.
- Bob: we have the mobile lab; we need to get kids in the simulators. The college needs to get involved with Napavine's program.
- Alice: That's a really good point, I want to bring us back a little and focus on something as a utility that we can hand out because we can't always be there. We don't have the resourcing to create all of these opportunities.
- Bob: Timberland Regional Library has invested about \$800,00 in portable labs to do whatever the public would like them to do. That might be another approach to look at.
- Alice: Jeremy, is this something you would want to help lead? A taskforce for that? Monica, do you want this to be a subcommittee offshoot?
- Jeremy: Yes, I would be happy to help and participate but I don't know that I have the capacity to build anything but might have someone here who can.
- Nicole: would it be ideal if we all shared what we are already doing? So we can see and compare.
- Jeremy: maybe there is a way to partner with OSPI so that it could go into curriculum?
- John: Rochester HS has a dual credit class in robotics, if we could build up the number of schools doing this and feeding them into the programs at the college, they can grow into it with room to grow (like getting an engineering degree). Aman has worked with Rochester, Napavine, and maybe more about dual credit.

Follow up action item: Alice, Nicole, and Jeremy will take it offline and start exploration.

1:30 Pulse of the Sector

What are your top two emergent needs?

Where is your workforce growing or being re-shaped?

- Bob: I believe the emergent needs are to get as much continuity between all the entities doing training as possible and start working together.
- Christine: our workforce is growing and being shaped every day based on new technology. We like to partner with our utilities to help them upskill and meet the needs.
- Nicole: the technology pieces and how they incorporate with different positions. Any kind of broadband apprenticeship information would be great.
- Travis: just getting candidates right now is really tough. Some pools are pretty good and others are not, it's hit and miss. In the field, the technology piece- trying to help them get comfortable with it.

- Monica: what are the gaps are you seeing in the candidates' pool?
 - Travis: it's kind of all over the place, we used to hire out of the civil engineering program here but that's closed now. GIS analyst had a poor pool, engineering intern had a great pool. Some consistency would be helpful.
 - Alice: for our organization, when I talk to our hiring managers the biggest gaps they are seeing is experience.
- Erik: our needs are similar to what I've been hearing here, and revamping our RSI. One of our workbooks from 1970. Our metermen are having to learn to code- you basically have a smartphone strapped to your house.
- Alice: how to ensure we get talent with modern skills.
- John: creating that pipeline from HS to the college with multiple on and off ramps to match what industry needs and a big enough end goal for students.
- Nicole: I have a 5th grader and they are testing for high-cap programs; do we get involved with that?
- ML: next week is Public Works Week. We have a program called Touch-A-Truck where we take the trucks out to elementary schools. 5th grade level is the perfect time to take kids out to the dams and learn more than protect the fish. What's working well for us is internal training, being able to attract lineman and many of them want to transition to substation operators or relay technician and it saves a significant amount of training time. We will be the ones castigated in the press if the power fails, we have to say this is not going to work. The power will go out if we don't do or say something. There's a 115KV transmission line in Seattle and have been trying for 30 years to upgrade.
 - Alice: our superintendent is finally speaking out about this, he's within his 5-year plan to retire, but it is a lot of doom and gloom for what is coming and what it means for our customers.
- Jeremy: with our high school Craft Student Program, how do we transition them better into the workforce. The employees love the program and teaching them but making that 18-year-old a coworker is a challenge and maturity can be questionable. Apprenticeship readiness program, none of the lineworker programs (VOLTA, NW LINE) accept federal student aid. It can be a challenge to come up with the funds for those programs.
 - Christine: will be seeking funding through legislation to help remove barriers for those seeking their CDL.
 - Nicole: we had a couple seasonal workers that have their CDL, they were able to get it through running start.
- Kate: there is an opportunity with the hydrogen hub funding- we built into the proposal an education and training coalition to develop those pathways with on and off ramps for students. I am hoping once we get to award and we put this group together we can bring everyone together in a central place.
- Monica: I have a request. Coming up this fall is a climate commitment act that we will be looking at to vote. Please read both sides. If it passes, we will lose millions of dollars of funding in the state and people will lose their jobs. Read both sides carefully.
- Bob: the environmental programs that we have established in this state for clean energy will cause a lot of pain, cost a lot of money and take a lot of time. We're going to be in a crisis in the power industry before too long.

- Christine: we have to raise the alarm and have these difficult conversations. IBEW has been proudly and strongly voicing this- we acknowledge that climate change is real and we want to be part of the solution but do not back us into a corner and compromise worker safety.

Monica final comments

I want to thank you all for being here today and for being on the board, and those who are no longer on the board. You are all appreciated.

2:00 Adjourn