

Lane Community College Becomes Largest EWEB Windpower Customer



In December, 2005, Lane Community College

(LCC) became the first community college in Oregon and only the second of any Oregon college to sign the "Talloires Declaration," a 10-point action plan for achieving environmental sustainability.

In an historic attempt to define and promote sustainability in higher education, 22 university presidents and chancellors convened in Talloires, France in October, 1990.

They came to voice their concerns about the state of the world and create a document which defined key actions that institutions of higher education must take to create a sustainable future.

One of the key tenets of the document is to practice institutional ecology. This means setting an example of environmental responsibility by establishing institutional ecology policies and practices of resource conservation, recycling,



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Jo Rodgers (left) and Tammie Stark examine the rainwater catchment demonstration on the southwest side of Building 10.

waste reduction and environmentally sound operations.

As part of this commitment to sustainability, LCC signed up as a 10 percent EWEB Windpower customer for all of its facilities, including main campus, downtown branch and Eugene Airport in December 2005. With one fell swoop, LCC became Eugene Water & Electric Board's largest commercial windpower customer. For 2006, LCC will purchase nearly 1.5 million kilowatt hours of clean, renewable windpower.

"We had been looking at both reducing energy use through conservation and using more renewable energy options like solar and windpower," says Marie Matsen, LCC Vice-President for College Operations. "As administrators, we feel responsible to take a holistic approach to sustainability while reducing our environmental impact."

Matsen credits LCC Sustainability Coordinator Jennifer Hayward and Energy Analyst Anna Scott for helping facilitate the decision to sign up for EWEB Windpower.

"When we ran the numbers, the cost of EWEB Windpower was slightly more but well worth it," says Hayward. "The more we purchase windpower and other renewable energy resources, the more the cost will go down."

EWEB Windpower "seemed like a good fit for our energy portfolio," says Scott.

She hopes that LCC's purchase of a renewable energy resource will "inspire other large commercial customers to sign up for EWEB Windpower."

But the purchase of EWEB Windpower is only part of the big picture, says Matsen. "We've been integrating issues of sustainability into curriculum as well as operations. It's important that students understand elements of sustainability."

In addition to windpower, EWEB has a long history of partnering with Lane Community College in the pursuit of energy conservation opportunities. EWEB and LCC have worked together over the years on installing energy efficient lighting and heating, ventilating and air conditioning equipment at the college, achieving more than 5 million kilowatt hours of energy savings annually.

More than 25 years ago, when EWEB began its efforts to change the energy efficiency of our community, the utility went to LCC for assistance. Before an industry of energy efficiency professionals had been established, EWEB asked Lane Community College to train the utility's staff to provide expert energy efficiency advice to customers.

Seeing the value to the community of this educational service, LCC developed this beginning into arguably the best energy-efficiency training program west of the Mississippi. The program has produced hundreds of graduate energy managers who have helped local businesses become more energy efficient and achieve their sustainability goals.

LCC's Energy Management Program, a national model of industry-supported education, began with a Bonneville Power Administration grant and now is funded through EWEB and other sources. In 2003, the program was chosen for a national Innovation of the Year Award.

More recently, LCC had solar photovoltaic cells installed on the math and science buildings, and the school is also looking at the use of biodiesel fuels, indoor air quality and reviewing building plans for Leadership in Energy Efficient Design (LEED) buildings.

"Here at LCC, we're getting into renewables so that more of these kinds of windpower projects can be developed and we can build upon our good choices," says Scott.



Solar photovoltaic panels generate electricity in Building 16, the math and science complex.

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