



Building a Skilled Energy Workforce Together

November 2022 E-Newsletter

Official newsletter of the
Utilities and Energy
Coordination Network –
join UECN now!

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Grant Updates

ATE Conference by *Howard Herrild, Associate Dean*

In October, members of NWTC's UECN network attended the National Science Foundation Advanced Technical Education Principal Investigators conference in Washington DC. The conference gave Principal Investigators (PI) the chance to connect with students, attend high impact workshops, and network with other grant-funded folks. We attended presentations on topics ranging from Cybersecurity to Diversity Equity and Inclusion. Jenny Brinker, Energy Management Instructor, and Jill Thiede, Associate Dean, presented posters of their projects at the ATE Connects Sessions. These posters presented information about each grant and their status. The common themes from this conference were providing access to education and advancing workforce skills.

As NWTC transitions though the midpoint of the semester our enrollments continue to grow post COVID. This was a common theme from other colleges that support the trades. Hopefully, this means there are more folks entering trades careers than over the past few years.

UECN ATE Microsite

For current program information, past newsletters, training opportunities, and more check out UECN's microsite: <https://ate.is/UECN>

Network Survey

Thank you to everyone who completed the year 3 UECN survey sent out in October. Early in 2023, the results will be summarized and will help determine if our efforts to connect industry, education, and outside agencies are succeeding.

This and That



Solar Energy Technology

- Progress on the 20KW Ground Mount Solar Array designed and installed by the students continues. This array will compare output of monocrystalline and bifacial modules for energy productions and other characteristics such as snow melt.
- Two new courses that will be taught in 2023 are being developed: Solar, Storage & EV (Electric Vehicle) Charging and Solar Array Operation, Maintenance & Monitoring. The industry continues to change rapidly, and these courses will keep students up to date with the latest technologies.



Energy Management

A survey of employers conducted by the Rucks Group, LLC was conducted late this summer to determine workforce skills needs related to energy management. Employers in this field include energy management consultants, facilities managers, building automation professionals, and energy program managers. The top software needs according to survey responses include Microsoft Excel, building automation software, and data logger analysis programs. Respondents rated the identification of energy efficiency measures as being the most important calculations and analyses for energy managers to know. Building HVAC and lighting systems were reported as an important knowledge base, as well as understanding certification resources provided by entities such as the Design Lights Consortium, Energy Star, and AHRI Directory. For full survey results, please contact jenny.brinker@nwtc.edu.

Electrical Power Distribution

NWTC's Electrical Power Distribution program currently has 38 students and is

halfway through their nine-month training. The morning class is working with the Botanical Gardens to help with Christmas lights.

Telecommunications

- Joel Mikulsky (Telecom Instructor) was a panelist at the "**Internet for All**" Connecting Wisconsin Kick-off meeting organized by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. The importance of leveraging Technical Colleges is key to closing the workforce shortage in this industry.
 - Kevin Gallagher, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Commerce, stated at this event: "...these jobs do require specialized training. Working with Technical and Community Colleges [and] exploring registered apprenticeship programs, is exactly what states should be doing to get ready for this influx of funding."
 - NWTC's **Telecommunications Program** is poised to educate students for family sustaining jobs and to alleviate some of the worker shortfall of the high-demand broadband industry. We remain in contact with key contacts to ensure we are included in the implementation of broadband education and in any funding opportunities.
 - Sign up to support the "Internet for All" initiatives: www.internetforall.gov



- Outreach continues including demonstrations and attending career fairs at area High Schools and the **School of Innovation**.
- The Telecommunications Program Advisory committee met on October 13, 2022, to discuss curriculum development and workforce needs that will align both current employees looking to add skills and students looking for an associate degree. We appreciate our advisory committee members' support and input to bolster our **Telecommunications Program**.



- NWTC continues to work with material manufacturers, software vendors, hardware suppliers, installation contractors, broadband providers, and engineering companies to forge relationships and collaboration with the Telecommunications Program. Donations and educational discounts have been generous and essential to build a strong program with the best

equipment and materials for our students. If you'd like to become involved, contact [Joel Mikulsky](#), telecom instructor.

Telecom Grant Updates

- The [Wisconsin Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access](#) meets monthly to discuss topics related to broadband access and how to ensure a successful rollout.
 - The Broadband Infrastructure Bill (BIL) includes a Broadband Workforce Development funding opportunity for Technical Colleges. We will continue to be involved in the [White House Talent Pipeline Challenge](#).
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Gas Utility Construction and Service

Employers who completed the Gas Utility survey were invited to attend the fall Advisory Committee meeting in September to review [survey results](#) and hear grant updates. Thank you to all who participated in the survey and attended the meeting.

1. **Student recruitment:** Is going strong. Current students and Tom Hebert, gas utility instructor, spent a week at an area high school demonstrating pipe fusion and explaining what the program includes. There were nine students who followed up on this training with in-person program shadowing. In addition, a student led recruitment activity visited a high school and spoke over an 8-hour period to eight total classes each averaging 25 students. Our shadowing continues to be strong with the program averaging 3-5 new students per week.
2. **Curriculum:** The next step is to determine if the current curriculum meets industry needs. The challenge is to find out if other skills should be added. All companies, especially companies that hire NWTC graduates, are asked to review the current curriculum and let us know if skills are missing. The Gas Utility instructor team will take this information, review it, and present specific curriculum changes at the spring Advisory Committee meeting.
3. **Duplicating the program:** NWTC's first partnership is with Frontier Technical College in southern Illinois. Their program scheduled to start in fall 2024 is based on NWTC's current program.

If you have any questions or curriculum comments, contact [Tom Hebert](#).

Upcoming Trainings and Seminars

For the latest in training and seminars, visit:

- [NWTC Corporate Training and Economic Development \(CTED\)](#): Training and services tailored to individual company needs.

- **Center for Renewable Energy Advanced Technological Education (CREATE):** Creating a skilled technical workforce to implement the transformation of the world's energy industries.
- **Slipstream:** Discovers, tests, and scales climate solutions in buildings and communities.
- **Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC):** Committed to a clean energy future that is dependable, resilient, and equitable.
- **Midwest Energy Association (MEA):** Empowering the energy industry through education, leadership development, and industry connections.
- **Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA):** Promotes renewable energy and sustainable living through education and demonstration.
- **Environmental and Natural Resources Technology (EARTH) – formerly Advanced Technology Environmental Education Center (ATTEC):** Advances environmental and natural resources education through curriculum, professional, and program development.

To have your training opportunities listed, email bonnie.willems@nwtc.edu.

Connect With Us

Visit our website: nwtc.edu/EnergyNetwork

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