Workforce Development, Inc. receives $95,000 Renewable Energy Marketplace – Alliance for Talent Development WIRED Grant

Rochester, MN--The Renewable Energy Marketplace – Alliance for Talent Development (MNREM) recently awarded $800,000 to 12 area partnerships proposing innovative talent development and entrepreneurship solutions for the renewable energy industry in the 36-county MNREM region. Workforce Development, Inc., which serves individuals in ten counties across Southeast Minnesota received a $95,000 grant to strengthen the Renewable Energy Skilled Worker Pipeline project through addition of safety training, adding an Industrial Maintenance skills training component, and providing On-the-Job-Training opportunities.

The WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) initiative is a $5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, to foster new partnerships and ways of delivering education and training to enhance the region's talent development system.

"Minnesota has always been a leader in renewable energy innovation," said Mark Willers, MNREM board chair. "Our first round of MNREM-WIRED funded projects is already starting to show exciting growth and outcomes for developing talent in the renewable energy industry. With these MNREM investments, we make it possible for our renewable industries and our state to grow and adapt more quickly to our changing world."

This is the second set of awards through the Renewable Energy Marketplace to support talent development, entrepreneurship and business growth, and regional leadership and identity. The projects funded through these awards represent a step toward building the strong and proactive talent development system that the renewable energy industry needs to stay competitive.

Below is a partnership of the projects funded in this round – for more information on these and previous projects, go to www.mnrem.org

The awards support industry-led partnerships that will transform key elements of the talent in the region.

- $80,000 to Keoh Properties/CURE (Montevideo) to provide training to students and contractors to construct an energy-efficient, low-income home (in partnership with Habitat for Humanity and other partners)
- $80,000 to Green Lyfe, LLC/Ridgewater College (Willmar), and other partners, for training/education of students, existing workforce, and general public in renewable/sustainable technologies through construction of LEED-certified home
- $61,000 to Dotson Castings/MN State University, Mankato, and other partners, to facilitate the development of new renewable energy entrepreneurs/ventures in Southern Minnesota by bringing together entrepreneurship teams
- $76,500 to Ottertail Ag Ethanol/MN State Community & Technical College-Moorhead, and other partners, to provide alternative and renewable energy based, hands on educational programs to students in grades 8-12
- $60,000 to BioFuell Energy, So MN Beet Sugar Coop, MN Soybean Processors/MTM Performance Solutions (Willmar), and other partners, to provide supervisory leadership training for current and emerging supervisors
- $95,000 to various residential building contractors/Otter Tail-Wadena Community Action Council (New York Mills), and other partners, to train weatherization auditors/contractors to do solar site analyses/ solar air heating installations
- To Outland Energy/MN West Community & Technical College, (Canby) and other partners,
- $45,500 for GearTech training (Gear Failure Analysis);
- $14,500 for Gravitec "Train the Trainer" fall protection and rescue training
- $44,000 to provide hands-on training to present and future wind technician employees and wind energy students
- $85,000 to SMAFE (So MN Assoc. of Food & Ethanol employers)/Ideation Consulting (New Ulm), and other partners, to provide customized industry-specific training for Leadership Development
- $78,000 to POET, MN Soybean Processors/Windom Education & Collaborative Center (WECC), and other partners, to enhance the workforce skills of new and existing employees in the biofuels industry through a variety of hands-on training, technology classes and internships
- $95,000 to SoyMor Biodiesel/Workforce Development, Inc. (Albert Lea), and other partners, to strengthen the Renewable Energy Skilled Worker Pipeline project through addition of safety training, adding an Industrial Maintenance skills training component, and providing OJT opportunities across Southern MN

About MNREM-WIRED

WIRED is a federal initiative designed to energize the nation's economy through regional economic development partnerships and workforce education and training. The Renewable Energy Marketplace of southern and western Minnesota is one of 39 areas across the United States participating in the WIRED initiative.

To find out more about MNREM-WIRED, and to learn more about these and the earlier funded projects, please visit the MNREM website at www.mnrem.org

For details on the national WIRED program, visit www.doleta.gov.