

Willems, Bonnie M.

From: Amy Kox <amy.kox@nwtc.edu>
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To: Willems, Bonnie M.
Subject: Latest Updates from UECN – January 2024

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Building a Skilled Energy Workforce Together January 2024 E-Newsletter

Share this newsletter with anyone interested in collaborating with NWTC to adapt industry approved curriculum to start your own training programs. [Join UECN now!](#)

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Grant Updates

Last Network Survey Will be Sent in April; Please Complete – by [Kathleen Dean](#)

As the Utilities & Energy Coordination Network continues to develop, we regularly assess the connections among our industry and educational partners. In April, you will receive a link from our external evaluation team at The Rucks Group to a short survey designed to help us understand the number and nature of connections you have with other members of the Network. This information will help us to identify how we can continue to support our shared efforts to close the workforce gap in the energy industry. When you receive your link, we would appreciate about five minutes of your time to complete the survey. Thank you for your commitment to be part of our growing Network. We look forward to continuing to work with you!

Another New Employee Pipeline: Youth Apprenticeship – by [Christina Jungwirth](#)

Last week at the Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin Conference, Nick Kumm, General Manager of Marshfield Utilities, gave a presentation on apprenticeships for utilities. One area he highlighted was Youth Apprenticeship – a one- or two-year "earn while you learn" program for high school juniors and seniors. Employers teach the skills of a chosen occupation on the job, augmented by related courses. No matter what the youth apprentice decides to do after high school, they will be more prepared for success because of their apprenticeship!

In Wisconsin, high school juniors and seniors can be released from school to work in their chosen career path and receive school credit for working. Related instruction must be provided to support the attainment of knowledge needed to master job competencies. Related courses can be drawn from:

- Classes at local technical college
- Transcribed or dual credit classes
- High school courses
- Other options including employer-provided training, online courses by professional organizations, or independent study courses at the high school

These options can be combined in various ways provided they are related to the competencies in the On-the-Job Learning (OJL) Performance Standards Guide and meet the minimum number of hours required for one high school credit.

Many high school students are looking for employers to provide youth apprenticeship experiences. Employers using youth apprenticeship often find it is their best pipeline for new employees. They are getting employees interested in the field who are still in "learning mode" to be formed into the employees they need. If you would like to learn more or hire a youth apprentice, please reach out to your local high schools or CESA organizations.

NWTC, SWTC, and MATC Team Up to Apply for Wisconsin Energy Education Partnership Grant – by [Howard Herrild](#)

NWTC applied for a Department of Energy Grant with Southwest Wisconsin Technical College and Madison Area Technical College. The strength of this grant is focused around impacting small to medium sized manufacturing facilities around Wisconsin. The impact will come in the form of education and service to these businesses. Students from the partner colleges will perform various energy audits on small to medium manufacturing facilities, giving them an idea of their energy consumption and how they can offset those costs using energy management techniques and renewable energy additions. This grant also creates a connection for

these businesses to educate their facilities workforce on renewable practices and energy management practices.

This and That

Solar Energy Technology – by [John Hippensteel](#)

2023 successfully wrapped with three notable events in the Solar Energy Program.



In keeping with our goal of providing as many hands-on experiences as possible, second year students worked on design and installation of a few PV projects, including troubleshooting and repair on a 15-year-old system with a damaged solar module. This meaningful service-learning experience put students' skills to work to the great appreciation of the church.



The Great Lakes Energy Education Center brought the Battery Energy Storage System online. This system, which is part of the curriculum for the Solar Program, will store our overproduction of solar energy for use when the sun isn't shining. This will allow us to not buy as much electricity and store the excess rather than sell it back to the utility at a low price.



A second-year student bought a Tesla Model S Plaid and brought it to class so students could learn about it, take a ride, and even drive it. We are zooming into the new year from 0 to 60 mph in 1.9 seconds, powered by sunshine, where we expect to enjoy and learn from several new solar projects.

Gas Utility Construction and Service – by [Jason Nelson](#)

Gas Utility program students are working hard to learn about gas appliance relight and inspection in this 8-week section. The students will familiarize themselves with common gas appliances in the home. They will follow the NFPA 54 code to inspect the piping materials, venting, and appliance visual inspection. The course will also teach them the dangers of carbon monoxide along with detecting and repairing gas leaks inside homes. The students



will be graduating on March 6 and be on their way to great careers in the natural gas industry.

Electrical Power Distribution – by [Pete Mleziva](#)

The Electrical Power Distribution students are in their final 8 weeks of instruction. They will be learning about customer metering, secondary construction, chainsaw operation and safety, and basic transmission construction and work standards. Students will attend the NWTC EPD and Gas Utility Career Fair in February, and most students will have secured job offers by the time they graduate March 6.

Apprenticeship – by [Pete Mleziva](#)

The [Electric Line Worker Apprenticeship](#) and [Metering Technician Apprenticeship](#) students had their graduation ceremony in Wisconsin Dells on January 11. Fourteen students from NWTC celebrated the completion of their Line Worker Apprenticeship, and six NWTC students celebrated the completion of their Meter Tech Apprenticeship.



Telecommunications – by [Joel Mikulsky](#)

NWTC's Telecom Program continues to forge our relationship with the Fiber Broadband Association and the OpTIC Path Certification. Classes are underway utilizing the FBA's certification curriculum and testing. This synchronous relationship allows NWTC to get program ideas back to FBA for further distribution across a wide network of educational institutions and industry partners. FBA has become an efficient conduit to share our program ideas and bring more awareness to the UECN Network. This further strengthens the telecom and broadband workforce development on a national level.

NWTC Events Make Connections

NWTC holds a variety of student recruiting and career building opportunities throughout the year. If you are interested in holding an event of your own, we'd be

glad to share tips on how to coordinate a successful event.

Upcoming NWTC events:

- **Youth Apprenticeship Night** – February 5, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. – High school sophomores and juniors interested in Youth Apprenticeship are invited to attend this informational meeting with their parents.
- **Engineering Open House** – February 20, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. – Interested in science, math, engineering, energy, and/or technology? Stop in to learn more.
- **Gas Utility and Electrical Power Distribution Career Fair** – February 22 & 23, 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. – Gas Utility and EPD students make connections with employers from around the country to discuss employment opportunities.
- **Trades, Energy, and Engineering Career Fair** – February 27, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. – Students can start their career journey by connecting with leading employers in the trades, energy, and engineering fields.

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):** Builds the foundation for rapid adoption of clean energy and energy efficiency, toward a 100% clean energy future that is reliable, 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.

- **Fiber Broadband Association** – Works toward a world where communications are limitless, advancing the quality of life and digital equity anywhere and everywhere.

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

Connect With Us

Visit our website: nwtc.edu/EnergyNetwork

Email Bonnie Willems: bonnie.willems@nwtc.edu

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