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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No. 12-37

June 13, 2012

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AVTEC Dedicates Wind Turbine in Seward

JUNEAU, Alaska—When the wind blows 20 miles an hour in Seward, AVTEC-Alaska's Institute of Technology's wind turbine generates enough energy to run the Applied Technology three-building campus where it sits.

But the true value of the 121-foot-tall wind turbine, which was dedicated today, is the hands-on training it provides to AVTEC's industrial electricity and power plant operation students.

"AVTEC's wind turbine training reflects the state's commitment to training Alaskans for jobs in energy efficiency and renewable energy," Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Dianne Blumer said. "Our focus continues to be training for industry needs."

Funding for the Northwind 100 turbine, which is optimized for low wind conditions and can produce power at speeds as low as 6 mph, was provided by the Denali Commission and the State of Alaska.

The turbine is now part of an integrated wind-diesel system training program that is meeting the workforce development needs of a growing number of Alaska communities that are adding wind turbines to supplement diesel power.

The training program is a partnership with the Alaska Energy Authority and the Alaska Village Electrical Cooperative.

A part of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, AVTEC has a rich history of providing Alaska employers with well-trained and skilled technicians, ship captains, professional cooks and bakers, welders, practical nurses, mechanics and electricians, among other professions.

"For more than 40 years, AVTEC has trained students in programs such as oil and gas, mining, hospitality, transportation, construction, healthcare, information technology – and now renewable energy," AVTEC Director Fred Esposito said. "We can train Alaskans for a career in less than a year."

The institute also offers about 60 short-term training programs that take from one to six weeks to complete. AVTEC's main campus is in Seward, with its Allied Health program in Anchorage. Some training programs are available statewide through remote-site and distance-delivery classes.

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AVTEC – Alaska's Institute of Technology
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