



Twin Cities Development Association, Inc.

November 24, 2009

Senator Ben Nelson
720 Hart
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Wind Energy Training Center at WNCC Sidney Campus

Dear Mr. Nelson:

Twin Cities Development Association, Inc. is the economic development organization for Scottsbluff/Gering, Nebraska and surrounding communities. We would like to request your support for federal funding to assist in creation of a Wind Energy Training Center at Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC). The facility would be at the Sidney, Nebraska campus and would provide education and training for students interested in wind energy technology at WNCC. This is a great opportunity to provide economic development and workforce opportunities in western Nebraska.

According to the American Wind Energy Association, western Nebraska is one of the best areas for wind energy potential in the United States. There are a number of existing and planned wind farms in the area. Logan County, Colorado, two miles south of Sidney, is home to the fifth largest alternative wind energy farm in the United States with 400 wind turbines. Kimball County, Nebraska has an 8 turbine farm, with more turbines projected to be added. Midwest Wind Energy has plans to begin a 100 turbine wind farm in Banner County.

A wind technician program would work well with WNCC's aviation maintenance program already housed in Sidney. The curriculum for the existing aviation maintenance program includes courses that would be necessary for wind technicians. These include turbine repair and maintenance, electrical systems, electronics, programmable logic controllers and troubleshooting. It would also provide cross training opportunities for the line technicians training in the WNCC's powerline technician training program in Alliance. Another advantage would be the capacity to train the incumbent electrical workforce with skills necessary to work on and tie into private wind turbines.

Wind energy is a growing field with many job opportunities already available. The need for qualified employees in the field will only increase in the future. A Wind Energy Training Center at WNCC will provide quality training and job opportunities for western Nebraska youth. Federal assistance is critical to such a project. We ask for your consideration and support - to promote economic opportunities in western Nebraska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Rawnda R. Pierce". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Rawnda R. Pierce
Executive Director

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