



LTC JEFFERSON, LOUISIANA CLEANTECH NETWORK OFFER SOLAR TRAINING JAN. 12-16

Louisiana CleanTech Network (LCTN), in partnership with Louisiana Technical College (LTC) Region 1, offered the region's only North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) approved solar electric installer training course on Jan. 12-16, 2009, at the LTC Jefferson Campus at 5200 Blair Drive in Metairie, La.

The training course was a combination of lecture; hands on training; on-the-job training; real world solar applications; solar installation contractor training; National Electrical Code (NEC) information; explanations of The State of Louisiana and Federal tax credit incentives; and Louisiana solar installation contractor requirements.

This course taught the NABCEP Photovoltaic (PV) Entry Level Certificate of Knowledge learning objectives, and was approved by NABCEP. Students that completed the class qualify to take the NABCEP Certificate of Knowledge test. Additionally, the Louisiana CleanTech Network (LCTN) certificate of training, which all course graduates received, satisfies one of the requirements needed to be a solar system installation contractor in Louisiana.

The LTC Jefferson Campus is the sole provider of NABCEP approved solar electric system training in the New Orleans area. New Orleans has been designated by the Department of Energy as one of 13 Solar American Cities, created to help accelerate the adoption of solar technology at the local level. A large part of the city's comprehensive plan for the expansion of solar technology is training a qualified solar energy workforce. LTC Region 1 and LCTN are currently working together to develop future course dates.

The course, which teaches the NABCEP Photovoltaic (PV) Entry Level Certificate of Knowledge learning objectives, includes 48 hours of professional training presented in five days of sessions, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. each day. Anyone interested in learning about or working in the solar industry or starting a solar energy company may attend this class. No particular skills are needed. A construction background and/or electrical experience are helpful.

"These classes are very interactive and include a lot of student participation," said Stephen Shelton, LCTN director. "The 'on-the-job-training' includes the complete installation of a fully functional Solar Electric system, from installing the solar panels on the roof to the balance of systems which are completely wired and functioning. Two total days of hands-on installation training, including all materials and tools, means students learn firsthand how to do the job right so more Louisianians can convert to renewable power sources."

For more information about the course and possible future dates, contact Shelton at (504) 343-4638 or visit the website at www.lacleantech.net.

Background: Tax Credits, Partnerships Accelerate Solar Technology in Louisiana

The LTC Region 1 solar electric system training course offering is part of a statewide effort of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) to help make it easier for Louisiana to go green. The LCTCS has formed a partnership with the Louisiana CleanTech Network (LCTN), a non-profit organization that works to promote the growth of clean technology businesses in Louisiana and to encourage environmentally responsible economic development. Together they are bringing solar technology installation training to Louisiana Technical College campuses.

These efforts come on the heels of 2007 legislation authored by Senator Nick Gautreaux. Senate Bill 90, which was signed into law as Act 371, provides a tax credit to homeowners and apartment owners who install or use certified solar energy systems. The tax credit has been called the best in the nation for those who use solar electricity systems in their homes. In order for more citizens to take advantage of this tax credit, more installers needed training but training in the state was not readily available.

The status of solar training availability in Louisiana gained momentum thanks to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar America Initiative. In 2007, DOE named 13 U.S. cities as Solar America Cities. The partnership between DOE and these cities was created to help accelerate the adoption of solar technology at the local level, and New Orleans was one of the 13 cities chosen. A large part of the city's comprehensive plan for the expansion of solar technology is teaching the technology and training a solar energy workforce.

DOE and LCTN looked to the LCTCS when searching for a place to conduct the training. The Louisiana Technical College Jefferson campus soon began offering the solar technology installation course, giving students hands-on experience in installing solar panels. The first Solar Installer Training course that began in June was a great success and produced 20 solar energy graduates in mid-July. At that time, there were only five individuals in the state that were certified solar installers. The second class in September produced 16 additional graduates.

Louisiana Technical College Jefferson campus has become the sole provider of training in the New Orleans area, helping the city and DOE to achieve their vision by training installers that will work diligently to assist citizens in switching to renewable power sources.

