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### **RCC grads to demonstrate alternative energy project**

Three students graduating this June from the Rogue Community College Electronics Technology program will demonstrate their solar energy project June 11.

Their presentation will begin at 3 p.m. at the RCC Table Rock Campus, 7800 Pacific Ave., White City.

Part of the RCC Electronics program's Renewable Energy Systems Solar Project, the students' project will produce enough electricity to power half the program's high-tech equipment in the first-year lab. The effort has been funded by \$10,000 grants from the RCC Foundation and the Morris Family Foundation.

Three students who began attending RCC last year while also enrolled in high school collaborated on the project. After completing high school in 2008, they began attending RCC full time and will graduate June 13. They are former Eagle Point High School students Perla Andrade and Eric Ruiz, and Alex Smith, who attended Crater High School.

Their project will generate sufficient electricity to power about half the electronics lab's equipment, including computers, oscilloscopes and meters, according to Dave McKeen, department head of Electronics Technology.

"This project is just a part of RCC's strategy to prepare students to work with emerging technologies," McKeen said. "These energy sources are going to be playing increasingly major roles in our lives." An array of solar panels and equipment will be displayed in the parking lot and later installed on the building's roof.

The three students carried out the work as their capstone project for the Prototype Development and Documentation class. Work included researching energy requirements, available solar panels and battery chargers, and selecting equipment needed to convert power from DC to AC. Future students will be able to take the project further, McKeen said.

Board members from the Morris Family Foundation and the RCC Foundation will be on hand at the exhibition. The students began studying at RCC as a part of the Morris Foundation's John and Lillian Morris Scholarship program at area high schools, including Butte Falls, Crater, Eagle Point and Rogue River. The program pays all tuition, books and fees while the students are in high school.

(more)

After graduation, the Morris Foundation awards up to \$1,500 per year for students pursuing two-year degrees in electronics, construction, automotive, diesel, and manufacturing. Work is under way to add business technology to that list.

“The success of this project, and its ability to spearhead additional renewable energy programs and eventually lead to a certificate program, and the RCC Foundation's role in the process, makes this a very exciting and inspirational event,” said Jennifer Wheatley, the foundation’s executive director.

Starting fall 2009, RCC will offer an Introduction to Renewable Energy Systems class. The RCC and Morris Family foundations are also assisting in the development of a one-year certificate program in renewable energy. If approved next year, the certificate will begin fall term 2010.

For more information contact Dave McKeen, Department head of RCC Electronics Technology, 245-7844 or Jennifer Wheatley, executive director, RCC Foundation, at 956-7291.

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