

Illinois Institute of Technology Receives Grant for Smart Grid Training Center

Chicago, April 8, 2010 —

The US Department of Energy announced today that Illinois Institute of Technology has received \$5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to support a total \$12.6 million collaborative effort to establish a Smart Grid Education and Workforce Training Center. Cost share of \$7.6 million will be provided by the State of Illinois, partner universities, and other collaborating members to complete the center within three years. The center will offer smart grid technology courses and certificate programs for people of all ages via on-campus and distance-learning classes.

IIT's current smart grid and power engineering infrastructures will help train groups from utilities, corporations, labor unions, veterans, K-12 educators, universities, and community colleges to be the strongest workforce in the world, taking on global challenges in smart grid technology, energy independence, clean tech, and sustainable energy.



The new center is expected to train nearly 49,000 people in a three year period. After the three-year funding period, the center will operate as a self-sustained entity by continuing its instructor-led and internet-based training courses and instituting a fee-based membership program with multi-grade activities for its members.

Enhancements to the Illinois Economy:

- **New, sustainable green jobs / retrained Illinois Workforce**—Train the existing workforce through universities and the Illinois Community College network in order to retain and expand the manufacturing jobs in Illinois and meet the global challenges in smart grid.
- **Labor** – IIT will work with labor representatives to develop curriculum that can be integrated into existing labor training initiatives for energy efficiency-involved trades: electricians, carpenters, sheet metal workers, plumbers and transportation workers.
- **Veterans**—The center will provide energy training programs tailored to the educational needs of veterans, including flexible distance learning courses for service people who are currently deployed. IIT's Yellow Ribbon program provides free tuition for returning veterans.
- **Chicago Public Schools**— The center will also provide teachers with access to down-to-earth courses, field trips, "Energy Detective" programs, workshops, and webinars on the smart grid, plug-in hybrid cars, and renewable energy topics so they can teach their students in easy to understand terms.

Located at IIT Main Campus, the center will house industry-sponsored, state-of-the-art software packages to facilitate its workforce training courses. The training will include university-level degree and certificate programs focusing on smart grid technology, and additional programs led by community colleges. As part of the plan, \$400,000 has been committed to providing competitive grants to help community colleges develop associate degree programs in smart grid technology.

The project's team is led by principal investigator and IIT Professor Mohammad Shahidehpour, who is an expert on smart grid research and education and an active researcher for IIT's Wanger Institute for Sustainable Energy Research (WISER). Melissa Gordon, executive director of Operation Green Jobs and an expert on job training and counseling, will serve as executive director and partner with an advisory board of six expert executives from industry, academia, training organizations, and government agencies.

The center's 100 participating members include three US-based and five international universities, 49 community colleges and high schools, six city and government entities, eight Labor Unions and councils, one national laboratory, five transmission and distribution systems operators, five professional training organizations, 16 smart grid manufacturers and software companies, and 13 energy consulting companies.

IIT has long-standing experience in green energy research, education, and training culminating in the establishment of WISER and more than \$25 million in funding for current smart grid and wind energy projects. Current projects include the \$12 million installation of Perfect Power—IIT's on-campus smart grid implementation—in addition to the \$8 million ARRA funded Wind Energy Consortium to forward the integration of wind power in the US and implement and study an on-campus wind turbine.

Founded in 1890, IIT is a Ph.D.-granting university with more than 7,300 students in engineering, sciences, architecture, psychology, design, humanities, business and law. IIT's interprofessional, technology-focused curriculum is designed to advance knowledge through research and scholarship, to cultivate invention improving the human condition, and to prepare students from throughout the world for a life of professional achievement, service to society, and individual fulfillment. Visit www.iit.edu.

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