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Wendell High School Student Wins Magic Valley Energy Scholarship

August 2, 2021 – TWIN FALLS, ID – Maria Jimenez, a Wendell High School student, is the first to receive a \$500 scholarship from Magic Valley Energy (MVE), an affiliate of leading energy company LS Power.

MVE is planning a \$1 Billion investment to develop a 1000+ megawatt wind farm located primarily on Bureau of Land Management land in Jerome, Lincoln, and Minidoka counties. The project will bring 20 well-paid, permanent job opportunities to the Magic Valley and have an estimated ongoing \$15 million annual economic output after the two-year construction phase has finished.

Magic Valley Energy sponsored a 2021 scholarship to support students interested in a career in renewable energy. The scholarship can be used toward classes in the Renewable Energy Systems Technology program at the College of Southern Idaho.

Applying for the scholarship was made available to local high school students who attended a community open house featuring information on the Lava Ridge Wind Project. More than 65 students attended the April open house event along with hundreds of community members.

Jimenez said she enjoyed the event and attended because of her interest in technology and engineering.

“The Magic Valley Energy open house caught my attention because of the technology side of the event. I felt so welcomed in a place I had never been to by all of the MVE professionals. My favorite part of the day was when I learned how diverse the work field is with a wind project. I mentioned I had an interest in law and also engineering, and fairly quickly, they shared ways to combine both in the renewable energy field,” Jimenez said. “I realize the need for renewable energy is the way we change the damage to the earth. If the world wants to see a positive change in our planet, we can no longer talk about what we should do, but rather take action on what needs to be done.”

Jimenez is an active student at Wendell High School. She serves as the Senior Class Secretary on the Student Council and as the Vice-President of the National Honor Society. Jimenez is a soccer athlete and enjoyed being a part of the Wendell Peer Court course in 2020.

For those looking for a new career, CSI's associate degree in Renewable Energy Systems Technology is usually completed within two years; however, CSI works with high school students and those who are already working in the industry but haven't yet completed their degree requirements.

“Knowing that CSI has a fantastic program in place for wind technicians is something that makes us even more excited to bring this opportunity to the Magic Valley,” Luke Papez, MVE Project Director, said. “Hiring local talent will be a priority for us as we move forward.”

Enrollment is now open for CSI programs with courses beginning August 23rd. For first time advising, registration, basic financial aid, and payment information contact CSI Enrollment Services at enrollment@csi.edu or 208-732-6250.

“Having a workforce degree does wonders,” Eli Bowles, CSI Renewable Energy Instructor, said. “Even if you move out of the wind energy industry, having those base-level skills is phenomenal. Our students often go into wind, solar, maintenance, and food manufacturing. We have a 100% job placement. It’s an exciting industry for anyone who wants a challenge.”

For more information, please contact Amy Schutte at amy@hudsonandco.co.

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