

Success Story:
From Hair Stylist to Mechanical Technician
at a Major Biofuels Company



Background on the WIRED grant:

Front Range Community College's (FRCC) Energy Boost program, funded by the Metro Denver WIRED Initiative, provides participants with many of the skills needed for production and technician jobs within the renewable energy industry. The program offers classes in Basic Math Skills; Understanding Basic Statistics and Measurements; Metrology; Reading Blueprints; Introduction to Process Technology; Working in Teams and Communication Skills in the Workplace. Curriculum for the classes has been designed with major input from and to meet the needs of traditional and renewable energy companies in the region including Vestas, a manufacturer of wind turbines and towers.

The Energy Boost program at Front Range Community College has resulted in many individual successes; here is one of them.

Individual success story:

Robin Marsh was tired of missing her daughter's basketball and volleyball games and wanted to work in a strong and growing industry during "normal business hours." As a cosmetologist and hair stylist, Robin typically worked nights and weekends and did not have much control over her constantly shifting schedule. "I wasn't exactly sure what I wanted to do, but I knew that I needed a change," Marsh said.

A friend recommended a program she heard about at Front Range Community College called Energy Boost. "I didn't know what I was getting into, but I knew the renewable energy field was strong and growing, and the jobs in the industry sounded exciting."

Robin continued to work while attending night and weekend classes during the Energy Boost program. Marsh and other students gained math and statistics skills, learned how to read blueprints and measure things accurately and were taught teambuilding and communication best practices, all while being introduced to the renewable energy industry.

"Who would have thought I would go from cutting hair to working in the renewable energy industry!"

At the end of the Energy Boost Program, graduates were interviewed at an exclusive job fair with some of the area's top energy companies. One of the companies Marsh interviewed with was Solix Biofuels, a company headquartered in Fort Collins that mass-produces algae to make biodiesel. "I wasn't familiar with Solix before I entered the program, but as soon as I heard about the work they do, I knew I wanted to be a part of it," Marsh said.



Following a second interview, Marsh was hired as a Mechanical Technician. In her role at Solix, Marsh works in research and development, helping to design and implement cost-effective photobioreactors or storage environments for algae to grow and produce oil.

Marsh proclaimed happily, "I am proud and excited to do the work I am doing. I now have a stable job at a great company that pays well and allows me to attend my daughter's games."

The Energy Boost program provided me with the skills I need to successfully perform my job.”

Marsh learns new skills every day and hopes to grow within Solix. “I would like to be a trainer and teach others the knowledge and skills I have and continue to learn.”

The Energy Boost program has helped Solix Biofuels find the talented workers it needs to run a successful business. “Solix is proud to support programs like Energy Boost at Front Range Community College,” said Peter Letvin, Director of Operations at Solix Biofuels Inc. “Robin has been a great addition to our team.”

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE METRO DENVER WIRED INITIATIVE, GO TO WWW.METRODENVER.ORG/WIRED

To learn more about Energy Boost, go to
[HTTP://WWW.FRONT RANGE.EDU/FRCCTEMPLATES/FRCC1.ASPX?ID=12570](http://WWW.FRONT RANGE.EDU/FRCCTEMPLATES/FRCC1.ASPX?ID=12570)

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