



Avista Donates Microturbine for Student Study on Alternative Energy

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Oregon Institute of Technology to Use Microturbine as Part of Classroom Education

SPOKANE, Wash., June 9 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- A microturbine used by Avista (NYSE: AVA) during the energy crisis of 2001 as a supplemental generation source and as a test of distributed generation technology is seeing new life as part of a college program focusing on alternative energy technology.

Avista recently donated the unit, which it was no longer using, to the Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) in Klamath Falls, Ore., for its Renewable Resource Program. When complete, the OIT program will use wind and solar power, among other alternative energy sources, to generate electricity directly into the university's power grid for educational and demonstration purposes.

The Capstone natural gas microturbine generator, which is about the size of a home refrigerator and weighs 891 pounds, is essentially a small jet engine with high-speed turbine blades that run on natural gas to generate 30-kilowatts of electricity or enough power up to 10 average homes.

Bob Rogers, mechanical engineering professor at OIT, said the microturbine is a perfect fit for their needs.

"The microturbine donated by Avista will be installed as a component of the new Oregon Renewable Energy Center 'Smart Energy Lab.' This new lab will act as a test bed for research in emerging energy technologies," Rogers said. "Students will get hands-on experience in working with the turbine and seeing the interaction with other emerging and renewable power generation systems such as photovoltaics, fuel cells, wind and bio-fuel."

Avista purchased the microturbine in 2000 for \$60,000 so that the company could understand the operational characteristics of the technology, as well as to determine overall efficiencies and operating costs, and how the unit could be used to potentially increase system reliability.

Dave Heyamoto, marketing solutions manager for Avista and project lead, said the unit, installed at Avista's Post Street Substation in Spokane, was fully tested, evaluated, and put into operation during the summer energy crisis of 2001.

"The unit had 11,000 hours run time over about an 18 month period, and performed well for us," Heyamoto said. "However, as wholesale electric prices declined over time, the microturbine was shut down due to the economics of operation. It just didn't make financial sense for us to use the unit to off-set other power purchases to meet our customers' needs."

Steve Vincent, Avista's Oregon economic development director and facilitator of the donation, said it was a win-win for Avista and for OIT and its students.

"Avista had a microturbine that was no longer in use at the same time OIT was searching for a way to acquire a variety of alternative generation devices to educate students in the four-year degree program," Vincent said. "Our in-kind contribution fills a critical need in the program for OIT and comes at a time when the state's higher education institutions are strapped for cash."

Avista Corp. is an energy company involved in the production, transmission and distribution of energy as well as other energy-related businesses. Avista Utilities is a company operating division that provides electric and natural gas service to customers in four western states. Avista's non-regulated affiliates include Avista Advantage and Avista Energy. Avista Corp.'s stock is traded under the ticker symbol "AVA" and its Internet address is www.avistacorp.com.

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SOURCE Avista Corporation

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