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Ferris State University Hosts Third Michigan Energy Conference

BIG RAPIDS – Building on past successful Michigan Energy Conferences, Ferris State University will host this annual event for the third time April 7 and 8 in Big Rapids. “Conserve and Convert, Together Brings Solutions” is the 2010 theme, focusing on energy conservation opportunities, practices and policies.

While traditional industry workshops in residential and commercial built environment will round out opening day sessions at the conference, this year Ferris Energy Center Coordinator Arn McIntyre will see his vision come to fruition. Day two will provide a focus on education with officials from leading area colleges and universities joining industry leaders from western and mid-Michigan.

“The focus of the Michigan Energy Conference isn’t about presentations filled with a bunch of sales pitches rather it’s an opportunity for educational and business leaders to come together and discuss issues impacting Michigan residents today and in the future,” McIntyre said.

Along with Ferris, professors from Central Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, Northwestern College and Western Michigan University will be presenting conference tracks during day two. Other presenters include Consumers Energy, DOW Chemical Company, DTE, GZA GeoEnvironmental and the Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center.

Such topics rounding out day two include a presentation by George Erickcek of the W.E. UpJohn Institute, and sessions on building efficiencies, energy policy, renewable energy and transportation/energy distribution, along with industry exhibits.

Presentations during day one will include Sam Rushkin from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency giving an overview of the new Energy Star program. The United Association's HVAC Mobile Green Classroom will also be on location for hand-on tours.

The free evening portion of April 7 will once again award college students for their efforts in investigating energy issues through a poster contest. New this year is area high schools will also be competing. After the competition, guest speaker Michele Buckler from Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber will give an overview on what the carbon footprint is and its effects on energy conservation.

"The Energy Conference provides a forum to discuss important energy issues and foster ideas that will result in opportunities for Michigan," said Ron McKean, associate dean of Ferris' College of Engineering Technology.

The Michigan Energy Conference participation and support includes: DTE, The Right Place, Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center, Innovation Works, West Michigan Strategic Alliance, West Michigan Environmental Action Council, and Mid Michigan Community Action Agency, among others.

"By hosting this conference we are providing a forum for the public to understand energy efficiency along with the future of energy in the state," said Tom Crandell, director of Corporate and Professional Development at Ferris. "Our efforts will solidify Ferris to be known as the energy efficiency center of Michigan."

Ferris continues to partner on grants like the Energy Efficiency and Cost Reduction Initiative. Through 2009 grant efforts, there were 10 introductory building energy audits, low and middle income home audits and a technical energy audit – including computer modeling. Through this success an additional grant for 2010 was granted with the goals of following up on last year's audits, adding five more public buildings, three production facilities and more education of the public.

Since the first Michigan Energy Conference held in 2008, attendance has grown with more than 500 participants attending in the first two years. All conference events are open to the public, as well as students, teachers, faculty, contractors and industry, and will be held at the Holiday Inn in Big Rapids, except for the evening of April 7 which will be at Wink Arena on the Ferris campus.

For a complete agenda and information, pricing, or to register for the Third Annual Michigan Energy Conference, visit www.ferris.edu/mec. If you are interested in sponsoring please visit the Web site and request information before April 1, 2010.

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