

REGIONAL

Appalachian Regional Commission conference...

\$100K energy grant goes to OU

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Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland on Monday announced a \$100,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant for Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs to develop energy-efficiency and renewable energy-assistance services to Appalachian Ohio businesses, communities and residents.

The announcement came on the first day of the Appalachian Regional Commission conference in Athens.

Strickland was joined by state Rep. Debbie Phillips, D-Athens, in making the announcement at the Voinovich School on the Ridges. The award is meant to support a portion of Phillips' current proposal for an Energy Resource Center at the school.

"Ohio University's proposal here at the Voinovich Center aligns perfectly with our efforts at the state level to grow an advanced-energy industry in our state," Strickland said. "The university, as a result of these resources and others, will serve as a resource for information on energy technology, development, innovation and deployment."

The center will provide entrepreneurs, local governments, non-profits and residents access to information on energy-technology development, financing opportunities, training and project assistance. The project will include collaboration with state agencies and Ohio's colleges and universities with the goal to synchronize local, state and federal initiatives around advanced energy, according to a release.

The program is designed to build upon what Strickland called the Voinovich School's recognized strengths in business developments, information management, and its 30-year history of working with all levels of government.

Rep. Phillips said that the Energy Resource Center's aim is to position Ohio to take advantage of opportunities in alternative energy and ensure that Ohio emerges a leader in the 21st Century economy.

"It will enable us to move forward strategically to make the best possible use of the increasing interest and need for clean and advanced-energy research, development and commercialization," Phillips said.

House Bill 87, which would establish the Energy Resource Center at the Voinovich School, is currently in the state House Finance Committee on its third hearing.

"In this time of national economic uncertainty, the renewable energy sector is one that is adding jobs," Phillips said. "They are some of the fastest-growing businesses in my district and across the state. These companies provide



Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland speaks at an ARC press conference Tuesday at OU's Voinovich School. Photo by Ed Venrick.

good-paying jobs for Ohioans, and they will be integral to our economic recovery."

Funded through the Advanced Energy Fund, the center will serve as a clearinghouse for information about clean-energy, advanced-energy and energy-efficiency projects, Phillips said.

It will also utilize research that is underway at Ohio institutions and resources available to support those projects, she continued. The center will provide technical assistance to state and local governments, political subdivisions and businesses located in the Appalachian region in their projects related to advanced and clean energy, and energy efficiency, Phillips said.

During the announcement, Gov. Strickland referred to a new Pew Charitable Trusts ranking placing Ohio in the top five states for clean-energy job creation, as well as *Site Selection* magazine's ranking of Ohio as the number-one state for renewable and advanced-energy manufacturing.

"The fact is that we have brought in more new renewable-energy facilities and projects than any other state in America," Strickland said. "And we are number one certainly in the Midwest for clean job creation and clean business development."

Strickland said the grant represents his and others' continuing commitment to a prosperous clean-energy economy in Ohio.

Scott Miller, director of energy and environmental programs at the Voinovich School,

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was on hand with Voinovich School Director Mark Weinberg to accept the grant from the governor.

"What a great day for southeast Ohio," Miller said. He cited the region's "huge stake in the future of energy," citing resources such as coal, hydroelectric, solar and biomass technologies. "As a public institution, we feel compelled to help in any way we can to [aid in the] transformation to a cleaner energy future."

The grant money, Strickland said, is one-time discretionary funding he received from the federal Appalachian Regional Commission for serving as state co-chair of the ARC.

Strickland also gave welcoming remarks at

the ARC conference in Athens. The conference, titled, "New Energy. New Jobs. New Opportunity for Appalachia," brings together experts from the private, public and energy industry sectors to discuss the trends in and critical resources for America's new energy economy. Athens hosted the 13 Appalachian states for the three-day national conference.

This week, Strickland is touring (or already has toured) several advanced- and renewable-energy businesses and incubators, and announcing new initiatives to promote Ohio's role in advanced energy.

Tuesday, the U.S. Department of Energy awarded four projects in Ohio more than \$17.3 million for advanced-energy research.