

State to give training funds

Gleaner staff

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

The state will provide \$500,000 to help train the western Kentucky workforce for the technical jobs that could develop in energy and utility plants are built in the region.

"Our goal in the Education Cabinet is to help all citizens realize their full potential to be productive and contributing members of the commonwealth," Laura E. Owens said in a prepared statement.

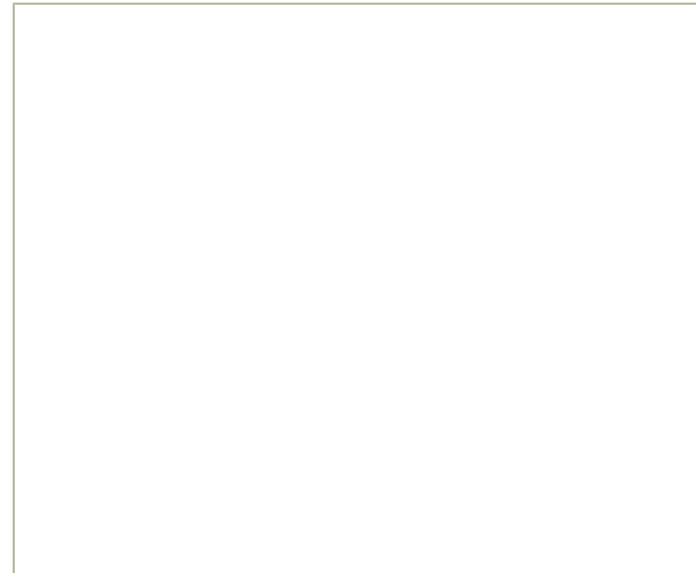
"Here in Western Kentucky we're hearing a lot about coal-to-gas transformation, nuclear power, hydro-generated electric power and the use of ethanol and biodiesel fuels," she said. "The transformation and use of this energy is the perfect example of how our world is evolving."

Owens presented the funds to the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, in partnership with the Green River Workforce Investment Board, at a ceremony in Madisonville.

The funds will be used at Henderson Community College, Madisonville Community and Technical College and Hopkinsville Community College.

The funding probably isn't enough to conduct a large amount of training, but "will allow them to begin job assessment and profiling to determine what kind of training the energy segment will need and start developing curriculum," Kevin Sheilley, president and CEO of the Northwest Kentucky Forward regional economic development organization.

The jobs that could be created by energy projects range from engineering technicians to coal miners, he said.



Beth Smith, workforce commissioner in the Education Cabinet, presented the funds and credited Gov. Ernie Fletcher for having merged two cabinets to bring workforce development and education together.

"U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor Emily DeRocco, who recently was in Kentucky, said that Kentucky is leading the country in this initiative," Smith said.



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