

# Energy and Best Practices Summit Comes to Centralia College

Well-Attended: Over 250 From Around Washington State Take Part in Event's First Day



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## 9th Annual Energy & Construction Best Practices Summit at Centralia College

Yoram Bauman, who calls himself "The Stand-Up Economist," gestures to the crowd as he gives the opening keynote at the 9th Annual Energy & Construction Best Practices Summit at Centralia College Wednesday morning. Bauman interspersed a presentation on climate change with a stand-up comedy style of humor.

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More than 250 people attended the first day of the ninth annual Energy and Construction Best Practices Summit at Centralia College Wednesday.

It was the college's first time hosting the event, which for the previous eight years had been held in Satsop. The event brought people from several community colleges around Washington, as well as civic leaders and representatives from labor unions and other workforce organizations.

The first day covered the theme "Sustaining Our Nation's Infrastructure," and carried a wide variety of topics. The beginning of the day focused heavily on climate change and what Washington can do to stem the tide of a negative effect on the environment while sustaining the state's economy.

Yoram Bauman, who bills himself as "The Stand-Up Economist," brought forth a humorous yet thoughtful presentation on carbon emissions throughout the world. He shared some humorous moments with the crowd, while at the same time keying in on a message that carbon concentrations are going up, but there's a way to get people off fossil fuels while at the same time finding a way to stimulate the economy.

“You have to think about climate policy along with your economic policy,” Bauman said. “The way to get less pollution is to make polluting expensive. ... We have to use the powers of economics and capitalism to protect our environment.”

The Pacific Northwest Center of Excellence for Clean Energy serves as host for the summit. The center is primarily focused on serving as a liaison between college students and the workforce, primarily in energy-related fields of study and work, to best prepare students for those types of jobs.

Center of Excellence for Clean Energy Director Barbara Hins-Turner said the event has so far been well-attended and well-received by many, with some people from outside the area getting their first in-depth glimpse at the campus of Centralia College.

“We’re economic drivers for these types of industries,” Hins-Turner said. “For Centralia College to get this was a pretty big deal.”

Hins-Turner pointed to the executive panel that included Keith Phillips, the energy policy advisor for Gov. Jay Inslee’s Executive Policy Office, as the biggest portion of the day. The panel addressed how climate change impacts workforce development and the economy in the state of Washington, and featured several industry leaders discussing the topic.

“That panel was probably the most powerful one we’ve had in the nine years of the summit,” Hins-Turner said.

Breakout sessions in the afternoon afforded attendees the opportunity to learn more about career tracks in energy, construction and advanced manufacturing.

Four other Centers of Excellence at community colleges in Washington are taking part in the summit, including the following: Construction Center of Excellence at Renton Technical College, Homeland Security Emergency Management Center of Excellence at Pierce College, Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing from Everett Community College, and Marine Manufacturing and Technology from Skagit Valley Community College.

Hins-Turner said the goal of the summit is to bring people together to examine best practices to

“We want to see what’s happening through trends in the industry and ultimately produce the best workforce we can,” Hins-Turner said. “It helps us educate to the best of our ability.”

The summit continues through this afternoon and focuses on earthquake readiness in the region. An executive panel at 9:30 a.m. was expected to discuss the current preparedness state of Washington’s major infrastructure.