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NEWS RELEASE

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NSPMA and NEEC Announce Educational Partnership to Offer Building Operator Certification Program for Energy Efficiency

Acknowledging the Building Operator Certification (BOC) training as a leader in energy efficiency education for facility M&O staff, the National School Plant Management Association (NSPMA) Board of Directors voted in May 2006 to enter into an educational partnership with the program's sponsor, the Northwest Energy Efficiency Council (NEEC), a non-profit trade association of the energy efficiency industry. Under the partnership, NSPMA members will be eligible for training and credentialing opportunities through NEEC's nationally recognized BOC program.

The NSPMA membership includes school superintendents, M&O personnel, custodial supervisors and others in school operations, whose goal is to improve the workings of the educational environment by providing professional development in facilities operations. The result is a more comfortable atmosphere for learning and enhanced operational efficiencies. The savings that result from these efficiencies enable financial resources to be deployed more effectively.

"BOC is a program that offers unique benefit to our members and their employees," says Kevin Hildebrandt, NSPMA board president. "We're excited about the opportunity to work with NEEC to bring BOC to NSPMA members." NSPMA members and their departmental staff will also be eligible for tuition discounts for BOC training through the educational partnership.

BOC is a competency-based, professional training and certification that provides energy-saving operational strategies for M&O staff and technicians. Participants benefit from both improved job skills and more comfortable, energy-efficient facilities. The certification also provides a credential for professional development while offering employers a way to identify skilled operators.

Participants save money for their districts almost immediately upon starting training through projects geared to deal with their specific facility issues. For M&O directors interested in examples of how participants are putting BOC to practice in their facilities, an extensive body of evaluation research can be found at the BOC web site at www.theBOC.info. This research shows, among other things, that BOC-trained operators are 30% more likely to engage energy efficiency practices than non-trained operators – to the tune of \$20,000 savings annually per operator.

Over 100 school districts nationally have sent employees to BOC with some 400 school M&O staff earning BOC certification.

BOC graduate Jim Everett, Physical Plant Supervisor of schools in Fort Fairfield, Maine is committed to education as a means to energy efficiency and savings. Everett said, “We’ve been pleased with what we have been able to do so far and are always working to spend less on energy and more on education.” Overall he believes the school district is saving 13 to 14% on energy costs resulting from the operational improvements that have been instituted as a result of the training.

Dave Cone, Facilities Manager and BOC graduate, has been a driving force behind the success of the energy conservation enjoyed in the Gresham-Barlow School District in Oregon. His enthusiasm has been contagious and his efforts were recognized when he was honored by the Association of Professional Energy Managers as 2004 Energy Manager of the Year for Oregon, and then the district was recognized nationally as an Energy Star Leader in 2005. “The BOC was a real eye-opener about where to look for system flaws and how to get your arms around how you use energy,” says Cone. “Many people still think of this stuff as smoke and mirrors, but it isn’t. It’s technology, it’s available and the savings are irrefutable.”

The Building Operator Certification (BOC) program continues to expand its presence nationally and to gain recognition as a leading provider of valuable training for facilities managers and staff. Sponsored by the Northwest Energy Efficiency Council (NEEC), BOC is already recognized as an “exemplary program” by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) as a part of a national awards program to honor America’s best energy efficiency programs.

BOC Level I certification is earned by completing 56 hours of classroom training and written exams, in addition to hands-on projects conducted at the operator’s facility. Topics include HVAC systems and controls, energy conservation techniques, electrical systems, and indoor air quality. Level II certification requires 49 hours of classroom training in even greater detail.

Over 5,000 operators hold BOC certifications nationally.

ABOUT NEEC

The Northwest Energy Efficiency Council (NEEC) is a non-profit business association of the energy efficiency industry. NEEC's mission is to promote policies and programs that enhance market opportunities for energy efficiency, of which BOC is one such program. Further information on the BOC program, training schedules, and locations, can be found on the national website, www.theboc.info.

National partners with NEEC in the BOC program include: the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnership, the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, the Wisconsin Focus on Energy, the North Carolina Community College System at AB Tech, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Building Operator Certification – California, the Northwest Energy Education Institute at Lane Community College, and the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority.

For more information on the NSPMA and the BOC educational partnership, please visit the website at www.nspma.org.