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Letters: More education needed to adapt power grid to renewables

By Staff (<http://buffalonews.com/author/staff/>) | Published 10:56 a.m. December 11, 2017

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More education needed to adapt power grid to renewables

A common criticism of renewable energy is that the electric grid was not built to handle the variable loads created by wind and solar. New York's Renewing the Energy Vision addressed this upfront by acknowledging the

need to upgrade the grid with 21st century smart technologies like microgrids and battery storage, and increased forecasting of potential sun and wind resources.

With the changes in how our electricity is produced and distributed, training needs to be updated to supply industry a workforce ready to meet these changes. Locally, there is sizable investment in research at the University at Buffalo and Alfred State to create materials and processes to increase efficiency of renewable energy production. There is no current local counterpart to train workers for the changes in the distribution system.

Penn State recently announced a program that fits this need. The Energy Storage and Microgrid Training and Certification recognizes that the design of microgrids and energy storage technologies that incorporate direct current power sources (like wind and solar) requires a different skill set than those to design the electric grid (which uses alternating current) over 100 years ago.

Vocational training is needed for installation, fabrication and design of renewable systems. SolarCity has started production and is due to ramp up production by the end of this year. Once an industry gains a foothold in an area, others follow as long as there is an available

skilled workforce. At this point, there is no vocational training program in the area that specializes in renewables.

Dr. Kristina Johnson recently became the 13th chancellor of the State University of New York system. Coming from an industry background in renewable energy, Johnson should look to addressing these gaps in the educational system in support of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's goal of 50 percent renewable energy by 2030.

John S. Szalasny

Williamsville

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Know It Now

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2. Elma regains lead in snowfall tally from Sunday's lake-effect onslaught. (http://buffalonews.com/2017/12/10/elma-leads-snowfall-tally-from-sundays-lake-effect-onslaught/?utm_medium=more_stories) > (http://buffalonews.com/2017/12/10/elma-leads-snowfall-tally-from-sundays-lake-effect-onslaught/?utm_medium=more_stories)

3. What should we call Sunday's Bills game? One reader's suggestion: The Snow-Globe Bowl. (https://www.facebook.com/TheBuffaloNews/posts/10155985159448151?utm_medium=more_stories) > (https://www.facebook.com/TheBuffaloNews/posts/10155985159448151?utm_medium=more_stories)

4. Sunday was the second time ever the Bills and Sabres both went to overtime. The first time was even more memorable. (http://buffalonews.com/2017/12/11/the-bills-and-sabres-went-to-overtime-together-for-second-time-ever-sunday/?utm_medium=more_stories) > (http://buffalonews.com/2017/12/11/the-bills-and-sabres-went-to-overtime-together-for-second-time-ever-sunday/?utm_medium=more_stories)

5. Gallery: The fans tailgating before Sunday's Bills game were in for a one-of-a-kind game. Know anyone who went? (<http://galleries.buffalonews.com/default.aspx?id=9533?>)



A Bills game like no other: Buffalo 13, Indianapolis 7 (OT)



Smiles at Bills-Colts tailgate (/2017/12/09/gallery9533/?



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