



THE ESPY *Newsletter*

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SP-WIND WINS *Team of the Year!* 2024

BY ANKE STAPHORST



This year's GWO Safety and Training Forum and Awards in Orlando, Florida, was a remarkable celebration of resilience and achievement, particularly for SP-Wind, which was honored with the prestigious 2024 Team of the Year award for the Europe, Middle East, and Africa region. Set against the backdrop of Hurricane Milton, the event underscored the commitment to safety and excellence in our field.

After arriving in Orlando Florida after 32 hours of daunting travel, it was shocking to learn about Hurricane Milton that was heading towards Florida. This prompted swift adjustments to the GWO Safety and Training Forum and Awards event from the GWO team. Despite the ominous weather, the spirit of collaboration shone brightly as the event was shortened to accommodate the unpredicted circumstances. The adaptability of the organizers ensured that the 80 odd attendees could still



participate and celebrate without significant disruption.

The awards ceremony took place on Monday the 7th of October in the lively lobby of the Renaissance Hotel, with GWO's Ralph Savage as the engaging host. The atmosphere was electric as SP-Wind and other award winners celebrated their hard-earned recognition. This award is a testament to being recognised for our dedication to safety, innovative training practices and facility and unique and exceptional diversity in teamwork and team development.

The next day, the formal Safety and Training Forum commenced with an inspiring keynote from GWO CEO Jakob Lau Holst. He led a thought-provoking panel discussion on the future

workforce needs of the wind industry, setting the tone for an event that felt especially timely given the approaching storm.

Herold H. Taylor, a renowned Learning and Development expert, captivated attendees with his insights on navigating Learning and Development in the digital age. His message resonated powerfully, reinforcing the idea that, as we weather changes - both literal and figurative - we must embrace new technologies while remaining vigilant.

Workshops led by GWO Training Project Manager, Thomas Redmond, tackled the future of digital training. Participants engaged in dynamic discussions about what innovations to adopt, what to approach with caution, and

what to resist. These conversations felt particularly relevant as we confronted the realities of emergency preparedness and the critical nature of health and safety in our industry.

Networking opportunities flourished, enabling attendees from South America, Europe, Australia, Asia, Africa, the United States and beyond to forge meaningful connections. Engaging conversations over delicious refreshments provided a welcome respite from the brewing storm.

As Hurricane Milton approached on Wednesday the 9th of October, I found myself making last-minute accommodation plans, ensuring a safe place to weather the storm. The irony of attending a safety forum during a hurricane was not lost on me. It underscored the vital importance of emergency planning and health and safety





management - cornerstones of our mission in the wind industry.

When the storm hit, our group of attendees - dubbed "The A-Team" by Jakob - came together in solidarity. In hurricane "lockdown" together, we shared stories, built connections, and engaged in fruitful discussions, transforming a potentially daunting experience into an invaluable opportunity for collaboration and growth.

Simultaneously, GWO Training Manager, Thomas Gronlund, ran an IQTT course alongside the forum, showcasing our commitment to continuous training and adaptability, even in challenging circumstances. We were fortunate to be in a secure environment, surrounded by dedicated wind industry professionals focused on safety and learning.

Hurricane Milton reminded us

that our industry is more than just wind; it's about the resilience of our people and the importance of safety in every endeavor. As I reflect on my time in Orlando, we keep Florida and all those affected by the hurricane in our thoughts and prayers, cherishing our achievements and the lessons learned during this extraordinary event. SP



2021

TRAINING TEAM OF THE YEAR
501 - 1500 WINDA UPLOADS
HIGHLY COMMENDED

2022

HIGHLY COMMENDED FOR
COMMUNITY & ENGAGEMENT

2024

TRAINING TEAM OF THE YEAR
EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

FROM THE GROUND UP

As the world moves toward renewable energy, the wind industry is rapidly expanding. For those seeking a hands-on, impactful career, becoming a wind technician presents a great opportunity to work in an innovative sector while contributing to a greener future. The journey to becoming a wind technician starts from the ground up, where individuals gain the essential skills needed to keep wind turbines operating efficiently—often learning the ropes, quite literally.

Certification plays a crucial role in this process. Aspiring wind technicians must obtain the Global Wind Organization (GWO) Basic Safety Training certification, which covers important areas such as first aid, fire safety, and working at heights—vital skills for anyone in the field. Additional training is also typically required to meet

A career in wind...

BY TANYA OOSTHUIZEN

workplace safety regulations. To move up in the industry, technicians often pursue the GWO Basic Technical Training certification, which provides advanced knowledge in mechanical systems, bolt tightening, electrical components, hydraulics, and installation techniques.

Career progression is further enhanced by specialized courses, such as slinger signaller, advanced rescue techniques, and crane and hoist basic user, all of which prepare technicians to work safely and effectively.

Starting with entry-level roles, new technicians often learn on

the job, working on wind farms or with turbine maintenance teams. The work can be physically demanding, but for those who enjoy working outdoors, solving technical problems, and experiencing the beauty of nature—since many wind farms are located in remote areas—it's an incredibly rewarding career.

With the wind energy sector growing quickly, there's a high demand for skilled wind technicians worldwide. This career offers abundant opportunities for advancement, allowing technicians to literally and figuratively climb to new heights as they progress in the field. **SP**

