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Community Colleges in Northeastern Pennsylvania Receive \$10 Million Grant to Provide Training in High Priority Jobs

Three community colleges in Pennsylvania -- Lehigh Carbon Community College, Luzerne County Community College and Northampton Community College will receive a four-year \$10 million federal grant to develop new degree, certificate, and diploma programs in high priority career fields.

The announcement was made today by Vice President Joe Biden, U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. The funding is part of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCT) competitive grant program which is co-administered by the two departments.

Under the grant led by Northampton Community College, Lehigh Carbon Community College will receive \$1,809,350; Luzerne County Community College will receive \$1,836,214; and Northampton Community College will receive \$6,354,436 to work with employers to develop affordable degree, certificate and diploma programs in three industry sectors -- advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics/transportation. The occupations being targeted will include healthcare office specialist, healthcare office coordinator, pharmacy technician specialist, healthcare billing and coding specialist, machinery repair technician, instrumentation technician, advanced manufacturing/integrated systems technology specialist, welder, and diesel engine specialist.

Some of the programs will be offered at all three colleges while others may be specific to one of the colleges. Program development is expected to take 12 to 18 months. Students who enroll will have the benefit of remediation for those who need it and technology-enhanced learning proven to be effective in occupational training. Some students may also qualify for credit for prior learning.

The programs are intended to help to prepare low-wage workers for middle-class jobs and to grow the economy.

Employer partners include Airgas, B. Braun Medical Inc., Blue Mountain Health Systems, Fisher Clinical Services, Fresh Pet Kitchens, Just Born Inc., K-Fab Inc., Lehigh Valley Health Network, Linde Corporation, Machining Technologies, Mack Trucks, Martz Group, Medico Industries, Ocean Spray, Pocono Medical Center, St. Luke's Hospital Miner's Campus, St. Luke's Physician Group, Victaulic, and Waste Management.

Public workforce system partners include PA Department of Labor & Industry and their JobGateway and PA CareerCoach programs, the Business Services Teams at the local CareerLinks, and the Lackawanna, Lehigh Valley, Luzerne/Schuylkill, Northern Tier, and Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Boards.

"The Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges (PACCC) is thrilled that the Department of Labor and Department of Education have selected Northampton Community College, together with Lehigh Carbon Community College and Luzerne Community College, as a recipient in the latest round of TAACCT grants," says Elizabeth Bolden, President/CEO of PACCC. "These funds will provide much-needed training and education to the workforce in northeastern PA. Our community colleges are nimble and responsive to the needs of their local economy -- and this grant is a natural extension of the work our colleges, with strong records of success and cost-effective operations, undertake in their communities every day."

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