

CATALYST

summer 2013

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH EDUCATION

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An Investment in the Future

BUILD OUT OF THE CENTER FOR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING CONTINUES

Piedmont Technical College will be moving forward with the second phase of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing in Laurens County in fall 2013.

Since opening in May 2012, the Center has been used extensively by businesses in the county to train new and existing employees.

More than 640 students have received training through readySC and through PTC's QuickSkills programs, which are designed to equip students for entry-level employment in the county's expanding advanced manufacturing sector in only a few weeks' time.

"We've been able to provide a level of training in Laurens County over the past year that was impossible before this facility," said Rusty Denning, associate vice president for Continuing Education and Economic Development. "We're looking forward to completing the project to provide a dedicated space for the full industrial programs the county's growing manufacturing sector will require." (continued on page 2)

PIEDMONT
Technical College

Your goals. Our mission.

Phase one of the project consisted of a renovation of 13,000 square feet, and included three classrooms, a CNC Lab and a CMM lab for precision measuring of parts.

Phase two of the Center, projected to be complete in spring 2014, will finish the remaining 24,300 square feet of the building.

The complete facility will include Mechatronics and Welding Labs, additional CNC and machining equipment and additional classroom space.

“We’ve been able to provide a level of training in Laurens County over the past year that was impossible before this facility.”

When construction is complete, Piedmont Technical College will offer full industrial programs in Mechatronics, Machine Tool and Welding entirely in Laurens County, complete with hands-on lab time for students — eliminating the need to drive to Greenwood for the hands-on portion of these curricula.

This second phase will also include flexible space to accommodate additional readySC projects as more industries choose to locate in the county in the future. Thanks to a recent \$1 million software entrustment, the facility is also home to South Carolina’s only fully equipped Zeiss Metrology lab, and to South Carolina’s only Precision Metrology program — a training capability that will be of great value to manufacturers in PTC’s service region and throughout the state.

The Center is located along the I-385 corridor and is within easy driving distance of industrial and business sites throughout the county.

“As Laurens County continues to grow, PTC is working closely with the county’s economic development office and with the business community to ensure that workforce needs are met,” said Ray Brooks, PTC president.

The fully operational Center for Advanced Manufacturing will supplement the county’s economic development plan in bringing more employers to the region by creating a full-service industrial training space designed to act as a catalyst for greater productivity, innovation and job creation.

NEW PRECISION METROLOGY CERTIFICATE

Beginning in the fall of 2013, the college will be offering a Precision Metrology certificate at the new Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) in Laurens.

The certificate will be the only training curriculum of its kind in South Carolina.

Metrology is the science of measurement behind the quality assurance processes that allow modern manufacturing facilities to make high quality products. Because companies constantly work toward eliminating defects, the level of technology required for quality assurance continues to increase.

Today, highly sophisticated inspection equipment such as optical comparators, profilometers and CMM (Coordinate Measuring Machine) systems are commonplace throughout manufacturing.

The Precision Metrology certificate is designed to upgrade or refresh skills for people familiar with the measuring systems required in advanced manufacturing industries and those involved in quality assurance.

“For modern manufacturing, the CMM is the backbone for making sure everything is being produced right to size,” said Bob Koster, department head for metal trades. “The new program included in this certificate will benefit those with the responsibility to inspect manufactured products.”

Students enrolled in the program will have hands-on training with state-of-the-art equipment currently in use in manufacturing facilities all over the state.

“The Zeiss measuring equipment we have on campus here and the accompanying software are almost the standards for quality in industry,” said Koster. “We’ll be the only college in the state offering a program like this. The training will be of great value to the manufacturing sector.”



News in Brief

PTC WINS PRESTIGIOUS BELLWETHER AWARD



Piedmont Technical College's implementation of Lean in Higher Education has been awarded the prestigious 2013 Bellwether Award, which recognizes outstanding and innovative programs in community college education. The winners were announced at the Community College Futures Assembly (CCFA) annual meeting in Orlando.

Piedmont Technical College is the first and only college from South Carolina to be recognized with this award. The College's program was chosen out of a pool of hundreds of entries from all over the United States.

SUMMER PROGRAM OFFERED TO INTRODUCE YOUNG WOMEN TO ENGINEERING



PTC offered its fifth annual Girls Achieving in Technology and Engineering (GATE) summer program June 10-13. This program is designed to introduce rising 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade girls to the possibilities of a career in engineering. Students participating in the program build and program robots, design and build prototype models and tour a manufacturing facility where they will have the opportunity to meet with professional women within the engineering technology professions.

PARTICIPANTS COMPLETE MANUFACTURING ASSEMBLY TECHNICIAN CLASS

Displaced workers from both Greenwood and Laurens counties recently completed Piedmont Tech's Manufacturing Assembly Technician class. The class teaches important basic manufacturing skills, soft skills, resume skills and job search skills that prepare participants to re-enter the job market.

NEW PHARMACY TECHNOLOGY CEU PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW IN 2013

Piedmont Tech began offering CEU courses for pharmacy technicians with two sessions in the spring of 2012. Since then, the college has added a third session in 2013 for a total of three sessions, and has attracted technicians from across the state to the Greenwood Campus for training. This year, a total of 146 participants completed Piedmont Tech's Pharmacy Tech CEU program.

DUAL ENROLLMENT WELDING



Piedmont Technical College and Laurens District 56 have formed a partnership to offer the PTC Journeyman Welding certificate program to students at Clinton High School. The program was implemented for the 2012-13 school year and 11 students completed the certificate for the pilot year. The certificate program consists of seven courses and will allow students to continue their studies at Piedmont Tech to pursue a welding diploma or go directly into the workforce.

HVAC PROGRAM HOSTS SEMINAR

Piedmont Technical College's Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) program recently hosted a seminar for students, contractors and HVAC companies in the region. The seminar, presented by Rich D'Averse with Emerson Climate Technologies, brought the newest compressor technology to the participants and gave them hands-on experience with the compressors.



Growing a Workforce From Within

SAGE AUTOMOTIVE
INTERIORS COLLABORATES
WITH PTC TO CREATE
APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAM

The promise of tax credits, higher level skills for employees, decreased turnover, improved productivity, and consistent training make the Apprenticeship Carolina program sound great for just about any company doing business in the state, doesn't it?

Absolutely, says Lee Matthews, plant manager for Sage Automotive Interiors' Abbeville and Sharon plants. Made aware of the program – which is administered in this region through Piedmont Technical College – less than a year ago, Matthews quickly caught on to the notion of providing his company with an additional pool of qualified engineering associate managers and also providing existing employees opportunities to advance their skills and careers.

"The Apprenticeship Carolina program is a great fit for us," Matthews said. "When I attended a meeting

at Piedmont Tech to learn more about it, I realized it would be good not only for our company but also for our employees, so we set up an approved curriculum and we're ready to go."

Sage's Apprenticeship program began this spring. Participating employees will earn associate degrees in mechatronics from Piedmont Tech at no cost to themselves.

"In the end, we want the best people to work for us and we believe this program will help us achieve that goal."

"It really works for everyone," said Matthews. "We increase our pool of process engineers who will be ready to move forward into management. Our employees get to continue working while earning a degree."

While the two employees are in school, they will focus on projects that will immediately pay dividends in the workplace.

"The curriculum is being tailored so that what they learn will be applicable to what they're doing in the plant," Matthews said.

As a textile manufacturer that provides materials for the automotive industry, Sage Automotive Interiors is uniquely part of the state's industrial heritage and its future – especially the latter when it comes to investing in employees.

"Our governor continues to promote South Carolina as an up-and-coming manufacturing state," said Matthews, "so, I'm really excited about the possibilities this program will provide."

With South Carolina pouring so many resources into advancing the skills of its workforce, companies like Sage Automotive are in a perfect position to be competitive for many years to come.

"The only real cost to us is time," he said. "It's our choice to continue to pay our employees while they're participating in the program. In the end, we want the best people to work for us and we believe this program will help us achieve that goal."



The Perfect Training Solution

As South Carolina works to grow its skilled workforce, enhance its competitiveness and increase the employability of its citizens, Apprenticeship Carolina is a program ideally aligned with these goals — it very well could be that perfect solution.

Apprenticeship Carolina is one of the fastest growing apprenticeship systems in the country and is garnering numerous national accolades and recognitions.

Since its beginnings in 2007, Apprenticeship Carolina has played a key role in growing apprenticeship participation from just 90 companies to now **more than 600**. The number of apprentices has grown exponentially with nearly **7,200 apprentices across the state**. In 2007, only twenty-two South Carolina counties had registered programs, now all forty-six counties are represented with at least one registered program.

Apprenticeship Carolina proactively reaches out to nontraditional sectors such as health care, finance, hospitality and tourism, information technology and advanced manufacturing with the message that apprenticeship has evolved. It is no longer limited to just traditional occupations.

Apprenticeship Carolina's innovative approach has not gone unnoticed.

The U.S. Department of Labor recently honored Apprenticeship Carolina with a 21st Century Innovators and Trailblazers Award. This award recognizes programs for their long-standing success and innovative approaches to training U.S. workers.

A commitment to building South Carolina's talent lies at the heart of Apprenticeship Carolina's growth.

"As we introduce the benefits of registered apprenticeship, companies see the value in it – higher skills, decreased turnover, consistent training and a reliable plan for transferring knowledge from an aging, experienced workforce to the next generation of talented employees," said Brad Neese, director of Apprenticeship Carolina. "We walk companies through the process. We make it very easy – painless, in fact."

In addition, eligible businesses can receive a South Carolina tax credit of \$1,000 per apprentice per year for up to four years.

The Benefits of an Ongoing Training Program

MILLIKEN MCCORMICK'S PARTNERSHIP WITH PTC YIELDS RESULTS

Over the last few years, many employers nationwide have noted difficulty with hiring qualified workers, citing the scarcity of the kinds of technical and soft skills that are critically important in contemporary manufacturing.

One aspect of workforce development that can't be overlooked is a focus on employee development and training.

The Milliken McCormick Plant offers a prime example of an ongoing commitment to identifying employee skill needs, and developing a training plan that yields results.

QUANTIFYING NEEDS

Milliken recently conducted a comprehensive testing program using ACT's well-known WorkKeys test. WorkKeys is a job skills assessment system that helps employers select, hire, train, develop and retain a high-performance workforce.

Milliken worked with Piedmont Technical College to identify grant funding for the battery of tests, and had the College administer the test and interpret the results to gauge employee skill levels.

After initial testing, participants were enrolled in WorkKeys online training to boost their skill level for retesting.

Given the training needed to succeed, all participating employees achieved WorkKeys Bronze, Silver or Gold certificates.

As a result, Milliken gained a clear indication of employee strengths and weaknesses.

TARGETED CUSTOMIZED TRAINING

Milliken McCormick has worked closely with PTC to develop customized training programs in a wide range of skills — from PLCs to electricity, light-emitting diodes, and even lasers and rudimentary physics applicable to Milliken operations.

Although companies sometimes adopt a standardized curriculum for the sake of efficiency, it's often true that some employees won't reap the full benefit of the program due to differences in the way they process and acquire knowledge.

The result can be that, although employees are able to pass an assessment, the knowledge doesn't result in a higher level of skill in real world applications.

Enter Piedmont Technical College's Continuing Education program and instructor Roger Laughlin, who developed for Milliken a long-term training program that has inspired employees to learn skills in a

way that's being applied on a daily basis.

"My students are very competent people," Laughlin said. "Even though they could go online and pass the required tests, they had some difficulty translating that into a tactile skill."

Both the company and its employees were willing to try something new to benefit each other and to rethink traditional training and education models.

"In Continuing Ed, we do on-site contract training, so Roger is actually going into the Milliken plant in McCormick and training these students," said Kassie Hall, program manager for the Continuing Education Program.

"The hands-on training has been wonderful. PTC trains [our employees], tests them, and reports back to our engineering services manager so we can gauge where we are."

The training, said Laughlin, is tailored not only to a list of nearly two dozen skills areas defined by the corporation and tested regularly but also to the individual students.

"These employees want to learn – and I do not believe it is just to advance



their pay grade,” Laughlin said. “I believe they want to learn. They also bring questions to class from their fellow workers and I try to share information with them as well.”

One of the other benefits of the long-term training plan through PTC is its flexibility. Milliken outlines the overarching learning objectives – but they are subject to some change as a result of issues the students are having on the job.

The Milliken plant in McCormick, for example, cuts fabric by laser. So, Laughlin made a section on lasers part of their curriculum.

“That’s one of the really big benefits of having an on-site long-term training plan – the customization and having that training resource constantly available,” said Hall.

Suzanne Perry, the human resources manager at the Milliken McCormick Plant, said the program has been, simply put, a “lifesaver.”

“The hands-on training has been wonderful,” she said. “Roger trains them, tests them, and reports back to our engineering services manager so we can gauge where we are.”

“Once you find a good employee, that’s the lifeblood of your business,” Laughlin said. “Ultimately, you are improving the overall workforce. The better your workforce is, the more attractive you are to outside companies, to expansions and so forth.”

Milliken

Carolyn B. Penland



Administrator,
Laurens Memorial
Home for Aged, Inc.

Q: What corporate training option did your company take advantage of?

We took advantage of Piedmont Tech’s American Heart Association Basic Life Support training. Since we care for people every day, this training could mean the difference between life and death.

Q: Why did you choose Piedmont Technical College?

Piedmont Tech is close by and the program manager was willing to work around our busy schedule. The college’s availability and proximity to us is a benefit. It is also very convenient that they are able to provide training in-house at our facility.

Q: How would you rate the training delivery?

The college worked around our schedule to complete this training as quickly as possible, meeting our approaching deadline for completion and providing the training that we needed.

The instructor made this training fun and kept everyone engaged. As a result, everyone enjoyed this class more than others we’ve had in the past. Those in the class retained more since the training was not dull or boring. We really liked her approach.

Q: What long-term benefits do you foresee this training having on your business as a whole?

The biggest benefit from this training is keeping my staff updated on CPR skills so that they can be prepared in the event that it is needed here at work, at home, or in our community.

Q: What advice would you give those who are seeking similar kinds of training?

Take a look at your options, but we found that Piedmont Tech gave us more choices and worked to make it easy for us to fit this training into our work schedules.



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