Volume 11, Issue 10

October 2008

Community Colleges Respond to Shaw

Southwest Virginia's community colleges have become a valuable training resource for those involved in the construction of Dominion's coalfired power plant in Wise County and are helping to position the region as a prime manufacturing location, a training leader for the Shaw group said during a recent event on the VHCC campus.

"We've been very pleased with the response we've gotten from the community colleges – Mountain Empire Community College, Southwest Virginia Community College, and Virginia Highlands Community College," said Joe Halcarz, Workforce Development Manager for The Shaw Group. "We've seen a real collaborative effort to provide standardized training that I believe will make Southwest Virginia a target location for manufacturers."

Halcarz' comments came during a recent Manufacturers Appreciation Luncheon sponsored by the Center for Business and Industry at VHCC. Halcarz served as guest speaker for that event.

The Shaw Power Group is the Charlotte-based construction firm hired by Dominion to build its Southwest Virginia facility and Halcarz, who leads Shaw's training program, said he immediately turned to local community college leaders for help in finding a qualified workforce. Since then, Shaw has held two job fairs that generated 1,500 applications from people eager to work.

"The applicants we've seen are willing to work, they have a strong work ethic," he said.

To aid in preparing the local workforce, Shaw is working closely with the region's community colleges to provide National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) certification for those involved in building of the Dominion plant. NCCER provides standardized training curriculum and portable credentials for those involved in the construction industry.

Faculty members from MECC, SWVCC, and VHCC recently attended NCCER training. Once that training is complete and the NCCER curriculum is adopted, they each will incorporate NCCER certification into their existing construction programs, such as electricity, welding, and air conditioning, refrigeration and heating. Students who complete these programs and receive certification will have the skills needed to work on the Dominion project and to land other skilled positions once that project is completed, Halcarz said

VHCC President David Wilkin lauded Shaw's partnership with the region's community colleges, noting that workforce training is a key component of the community college mission.

"We work hard every day to meet the needs of the communities we serve," Dr. Wilkin said. "This is just one example of how community colleges can respond rapidly to the needs of business and industry to ensure our local workforce is skilled, trained, and ready to go to work."



VHCC News is produced each month by Anne Dunham of the Office of Institutional Advancement. If you would like to suggest information for the newsletter, please send your ideas to adunham@vhcc.edu or contact her by phone at 276-739-2456. VHCC is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.

Virginia Highlands Community College www.vhcc.edu or call 276-739-2400

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Happy

Crazy characters made an appearance on campus this month as part of the Appalachian Fall Festival and Halloween celebration. Among those spotted were (top) Upward Bound/Educational Talent Search employees who masqueraded as the Fruit of the Loom bunch; (right) Adam Rhea from the Library and Instructional Services staff, who greeted student April Avery as he impersonated Presidential Candidate Barrack Obama; the staff of the Office of Institutional Advancement who rode in on the Mystery Machine as the characters from Scooby Doo; and (bottom right) Beth Duffield, who joined her colleagues from the Center for Business & Industry in dressing like Crayola crayons. The prize ultimately when to the LIS staff, who brought along presidential hopeful John McCain, secret service agents and several campaign protestors.



Bristol Compressors is 2008 Training Partner

Ongoing efforts to increase the skills and knowledge of its workforce have earned Bristol Compressors recognition as the 2008 Training Partner of the Year by the Center for Business and Industry at Virginia Highlands Community College.

The Bristol Virginia-based manufacturer of air conditioning and heat pump compressors received the award for recent efforts to provide leadership development programs for the newest members of its management team. The training program was administered to 15 management level employees and included segments in delegation, principles and qualities of leadership, communication, coaching, planning for performance discussions, correcting performance problems, and documentation and legal issues.

"It has been a pleasure to work closely with Bristol Compressors to develop a training program that enhances productivity and helps management-level employees sharpen their leadership skills," said Melinda Leland, dean of the Center for Business and Industry at VHCC. "This is just the latest example of Bristol Compressors' efforts to meet the needs of its customers by focusing on the skills and talents of its workforce." CBI created the Training Partner of the Year Award in 2005 to recognize companies that invest in training incumbent workers. Past recipients include Scholle and Kennametal.

VHCC Student Named Miss Washington County



VHCC Student Courtney Gallimore has been named Miss Washington County and will be representing Washington County in Portsmouth in the Virginia Association of Fairs.

Courtney was also named Miss Photogenic during the contest, which was held during the Washington County Fair in September.

"All the other girls did great," she said. "But I feel my hard work has paid off. I am ready to be a respectable ambassador for Washington County."

Courtney is attending VHCC on a two year scholarship as a Washington County Community Scholar. She graduated from Abingdon High School and is a Manager for SW Virginia for Y-Street, a anti-smoking campaign for teens and tweens.

Lyle's Art Wins People's Choice Award

"Feminine Entwinement," an outdoor sculpture created by VHCC Art Instructor Val Lyle recently was selected for the People's Choice award by the Arts Alliance Mountain Empire (AAME).

Ten sculptures were installed in August for a one-year exhibit as part of the third annual Art in Public Places (AiPP) project in downtown Bristol, TN/VA. Lyle's awardwinning sculpture is located near the Country Music Mural at The Downtown Center in Bristol, Tenn.

"I find it hard to express my joy at being included in this exhibition," Lyle said. "It has been fun to watch people posing with the rope figure, draping their arms around it to have their pictures taken with it. While I wouldn't encourage kids to climb it, public sculpture should still be able to take that kind of public 'interactive exploration' and I anticipated that when I built it."

Lyle's "Feminine Entwinement" sculpture is made from tugboat rope she collected while living in Manhattan,

You may view additional examples of Lyle's work at William King Regional Arts Center now through March 1, 2009, as part of an exhibit entitled "Female(s) Form(s)."

For more information, contact WKRAC at (276) 628-5005 or look online at http://www.wkrac.org/upcoming.



Strategic Planning Results to be Shared

An open forum will be held Nov. 4, at 2 p.m. and on Nov. 7, at 10 a.m.. in ISC 220 to discuss the results from the internal analysis recently conducted as part of the strategic planning session.

The results of the recent analysis also will be compared to the results of a similar exercise conducted in 2001. Participants will be invited to:

- make recommendations for specific strategies to be considered;
- provide additional information about comments made during the group discussions;
- ask questions about the strategic planning process; and
- help determine the college's future course.

FROM THE

ARCHIVES

For additional information about the sessions, contact Jennifer Addison at (276) 739-2458 or <u>jaddison@vhcc.edu.</u>

Before she became an SPHR certified human resources professional, Deb Hale was a VHCC student in the police science program. Here she

is learning the correct method of fingerprinting

- something that could come in handy in her

current position.

Governor Kaine Seeks Emergency Volunteers

Gov. Kaine encourages all eligible state employees to support the Commonwealth's continuing efforts to stand at the forefront of a response to any disaster or emergency by participating in Virginia's new Adjunct Emergency Workforce (AEW).

The AEW provides opportunities for employees to be assigned to emergency response teams during periods of declared emergencies. The initial effort in a declared emergency will focus on the area of greatest need – the emergency sheltering of our fellow citizens. If the event of the mass evacuation of a large region of Virginia, state government will assume primary responsibility for sheltering and there will be a critical need for shelter support staff.

For detailed information on this important initiative, please go to http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/AdjunctEmergencyWorkforce.html.

Johnson is Legacy Scholar

VHCC Student Brian "Trey" Johnson of Meadowview was honored recently by the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education as the Catherine Smith Commonwealth Legacy Scholar for

Trey excelled at Patrick Henry High School, garnering both academic and athletic honors before graduating in May 2008. He was a member of the Student Council Association and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He also was the 2008 Virginia High School state champion in the 300 meter hurdles, captain of his high school football and basketball teams, and earned both district and state honors for his participation in high school sports. In addition to his school achievements, Trey is an active community volunteer who was named a VHCC Presidential Scholar and Washington County Community Scholar.

The Catherine Smith Commonwealth Legacy Scholar was named for Abingdon's first female physician, who was honored earlier this year with the Chancellor's Philanthropy Leadership Award for her generous support of VHCC programs and services.