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ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES RECEIVE \$13.5M FEDERAL TAACCCT GRANT ARIZONA SUN CORRIDOR GET INTO ENERGY CONSORTIUM

09/29/2012

TEMPE, Ariz., Sept. 27 -- Maricopa Community Colleges issued the following news release:

An education consortium comprised of five Arizona community colleges, formed as the Arizona Sun Corridor Get Into Energy Consortium (ASC-GIEC), received a \$13.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to develop programs and help fulfill the state's energy industry workforce needs. Lead institution, Estrella Mountain Community College (EMCC), one of the ten Maricopa Community Colleges, is joined by educational partners Chandler-Gilbert Community College, Northland Pioneer College with several campuses in northeast Arizona, Pima Community College in Tucson, and Yavapai Community College in Prescott.

The grant is part of the recent \$500 million federal Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCT) initiative intended for the development and expansion of innovative training programs at community colleges and universities nationwide.

The ASC-GIEC initiative will employ a variety of innovative and proven workforce preparedness strategies to train trade-impacted workers and other adults for high-skill, high-wage employment, and advancement in energy and mining industries. The initiative advances sustainable solutions to meeting the critical demands of the energy and mining industries, while improving the content and delivery of education and training programs in the Arizona Sun Corridor. The primary focus of the grant is to build program pipelines for current and future employees, preparing them for energy jobs or other occupations requiring similar skill sets, such as technicians, line workers, plant operators, skilled craftsmen, and engineers.

"This is great news for Estrella Mountain, our college and industry partners, and the State of Arizona," said Dr. Clay Goodman, EMCC vice president of Occupational Education, and consortium director. "Throughout the grant process, we received a tremendous amount of encouragement as well as financial support from our industry partners at Arizona Public Service (APS), APS-Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station and Salt River Project (SRP). Other utility partners include Tucson Electric Power, Arizona's Generation and Transmission Cooperative's, ASARCO, Freeport McMoRan Copper and Gold, as well as some of the smaller copper mining operations.

In January 2012, EMCC launched an energy skills training program, inspired by the Get Into Energy Career Pathways (GIECP), originally funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Charter partners APS, APS-Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, and SRP assisted with the recruitment efforts. Upon completion of the program, successful students earn the National Career Readiness and Energy Industry Employability Skills certificates, along with the Energy Industry Fundamentals credential developed by the national Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD), part of the Edison Electric Institute.

"Palo Verde and APS have a long history of working with our local communities, businesses, utility partners and educational institutions such as EMCC to make Arizona a better place to live," said Randy Edington, executive vice president and chief nuclear officer, Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station. "This federal grant is critical to the expansion of education and training programs, which will help develop the talent needed to meet statewide energy and industry needs in the Southwest. We are proud to be part of an effort that strengthens the state of Arizona's

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workforce development efforts."

Based on this successful model, Estrella Mountain was encouraged by the CEWD to apply for a TAACCCT grant and lead an Arizona consortium to further develop its Get Into Energy program and implement it statewide.

With a common curriculum in place, the ASC-GIEC will develop a new articulated, credit-bearing transfer path from the five community colleges to Arizona State University (ASU) for program participants who want to pursue baccalaureate degrees in engineering or other energy-related degrees. This, in part, will be accomplished by leveraging the experience and expertise of the Science Foundation of Arizona (SFAz) as a collaborative partner. The SFAz is chartered by the state with the responsibility to facilitate Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education opportunities across all public, private and nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities.

The ASC-GIEC represents a diverse and complementary set of Arizona schools, large and small, urban and rural. The group will develop a common curriculum, credit certificates and degrees to allow seamless transferability to accommodate the needs of students and industries participating in the Sun Corridor Get Into Energy programs. Chandler-Gilbert Community College, like EMCC, is part of the Maricopa Community College District.

"Arizona's future depends on high-wage, high-skill jobs, especially in the rapidly-changing area of energy technologies," said Dr. Linda Lujan, president of Chandler-Gilbert Community College. "This grant provides an outstanding opportunity for partner colleges to meet the needs of students, industry partners, and the state. Chandler-Gilbert Community College is honored to be part of this initiative and is excited to focus on innovative educational pathways and programmatic improvement to benefit our communities."

Nearly 300 schools across the nation will receive TAACCCT grants, including 27 awards to community college and university consortia totaling \$359.2 million, and 27 awards to individual institutions totaling \$78.3 million.

Funds will be used to create affordable training programs that meet industry needs, invest in staff and educational resources, and provide access to free, digital learning materials. All education materials developed through the grants will be available for use by the public and other education providers through a Creative Commons license. More about the grant program at <http://www.doleta.gov/taaccct> . For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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