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Manufacturing Workforce Pipeline Fueled by EDC Program

CPT program resulting in an 80% job-placement-success rate

Space Coast, FL (August 25, 2017) – In 2014, The Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast (EDC) launched a pilot program of work focused on building baseline manufacturing skills to confront the Space Coast's manufacturing workforce skills gap, and ensure Brevard County businesses would remain competitive in the industry.

Per the Manufacturing Institute, 6 out of 10 manufacturing jobs in the nation are going unfilled, and it is estimated that more than 2 million manufacturing jobs will go unfilled in the next decade. Brevard County, which has the highest concentration of the manufacturing employment statewide at 12.7% of private-sector employment, is being hit especially hard by this skills gap. Over 60% of the Space Coast's existing manufacturing workforce is nearing retirement, while only 4.3% of workers are under the age of 25.

To address this challenge head on, the EDC identified the nationally-recognized Certified Production Technician (CPT) course, and worked with Eastern Florida State College (EFSC) to promote the course to the Space Coast community. To provide further value to the local manufacturers, the EDC's program supplements the CPT course with a variety of initiatives to prepare students to enter the manufacturing workforce. With assistance from local partners, the EDC promotes and executes facility tours, soft-skills training, career fairs, pre-course assessments, and more.

Through this successful pilot initiative, Brevard County is seeing an upswing in its local manufacturing workforce. In the last year, 95% of CPT course completers have been interviewed by one or more manufacturers, and 80% of those certified have been placed in a manufacturing job after completion of the 10-week course.

"The EDC's work with EFSC is fueling the talent pipeline of skilled workers within the local manufacturing industry," stated Lynda Weatherman, president and CEO of the EDC. "However, this is only the beginning. The EDC will continue to explore related certifications, credentials, and ongoing training pathways to address our manufacturer's needs."

In a recent report, EFSC placed second in the state on MSSC's Manufacturing and Logistics (M&L) Certification Index. Florida also topped the charts, placing second in the nation on the M&L Index. With EFSC and Florida both placing high in the MSSC rankings, the Space Coast is further positioning itself as a leader in the manufacturing industry.

"EFSC is proud to have earned the number 2 ranking in the state on the MSSC M&L Certification Index along with the successful results from our CPT course," said college President Dr. Jim Richey. "The EDC program fully supports our mission to provide students with the education and training they need to have great careers and serve our community in the process."

"With nearly all of the CPT certified candidates obtaining a job within the manufacturing industry, we are seeing success for our manufacturers and for employment here in Brevard County," stated Tina Berger, CareerSource Brevard's Manufacturing Sector Strategy Program Manager. "We are excited to assist CPT graduates with placement and career counseling for the continued success of the EDC program, and look forward to watching the Space Coast manufacturing workforce advance as a result."

The EDC program supporting CPT training would not be possible without the following funders and partners: Brevard Public Schools Adult Education, Bright House Networks, CareerSource Brevard, Eastern Florida State College, Florida Bank of Commerce, Florida City Gas, Florida High Tech Corridor Council, Junior Achievement, Masonic Beach Lodge No. 354 F&AM, the City of Palm Bay, the Pastors Community Alliance, the City of Titusville, the Space Coast Human Resources Association, Pastors Community Alliance, Wells Fargo Advisors, Women in Defense, and Zonta.

The next CPT class at EFSC starts September 11 and scholarships are available. To learn more about entering the field of manufacturing through a CPT certification and to apply for a scholarship, visit www.SpaceCoastEDC.org/CPT

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About the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast

The Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast (EDC) is dedicated to attracting new business and investment and expanding existing industry throughout the Space Coast, influencing change on government laws and regulations affecting economic development, promoting the Space Coast to encourage new investment, supporting efforts of Space Coast military installations, and relaying new programs and procedures to assist manufacturing and high-tech companies. The EDC is a private, not-for-profit coalition whose stakeholders are business leaders committed to the economic growth and stability of Florida's Space Coast. Visit www.SpaceCoastEDC.org.

About the Certified Production Technician (CPT) Course

The CPT course is the first step for candidates interested in entering the field of manufacturing. Successful completion of the class results in students receiving the nationally recognized Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC) certification and 16 credit hours that can be used towards future STEM degree programs at Eastern Florida State College (EFSC) and other state colleges and universities. The next CPT program at EFSC starts September 11. Scholarships are available. To learn more and apply for a scholarship, visit www.SpaceCoastEDC.org/CPT