

CLTCC Grant Funding to Boost Manufacturing Training Programs in Cenla

Community college investment result of 'Beyond High School' planning



A manufacturing grant to the Louisiana Community Technical College System Foundation funds advanced training and education programs at the Central Louisiana Technical Community College. CLTCC staff, pictured from left, are: Nub Parker, Director of Manufacturing; Misty Slayter, Vice Chancellor of Workforce Development; Bert O'Neal, Dean of Technical Studies; Thomas Coutee, Welding Coordinator; and William Tulak, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness.

A \$4 million investment to strengthen manufacturing training programs at Central Louisiana Technical Community College is the result of careful, deliberate planning that started in 2008 when The Rapides Foundation began a community discussion around the future workforce of Central Louisiana.

Community meetings and a comprehensive report that followed were centered on the theme "Beyond High School: What Will it Take to Build Cenla's Next Workforce?" and got local leaders to

take a deeper look at postsecondary education and its connection with local business. The report emphasized the need for a community college in Central Louisiana and showed the tremendous gap between available jobs and proper training for those positions.

"We knew that a majority of the future jobs would require more than a high school education but less than a bachelor's degree. And so in recognizing that, the Beyond High School report demonstrated we had insufficient training capacity options within the region. It was a very

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Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation

logical, research-based study that in conclusion said we needed a community college and we needed to fuel employers’ growth and income growth by providing professional technical training,” said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation.

In December 2017, The Rapides Foundation announced it awarded a \$2 million matching grant to the Louisiana Community and Technical College System that will be used by CLTCC to establish the Central Louisiana Manufacturing Technology Center in downtown Alexandria and to build and expand its manufacturing programs located on campuses throughout the region. The State of Louisiana matched the Foundation’s funding with \$2 million.

The three-year grant is part of the Foundation’s Economic Development Initiative, which supports its mission of improving the health status of Central Louisiana by making the link between healthy economies and healthy people. Healthy economies with low unemployment rates and higher wage jobs provide people with the means to purchase medical insurance, make better healthcare choices and live healthier lifestyles. For that reason, the initiative aims to raise the standard of living in Central Louisiana by improving the region’s capacity to produce higher wage jobs for all income levels.

The Workforce Skills and Development component of the Economic Development Initiative supports efforts to build a cohesive and effective workforce development system in the region that meets the demands of employers, quickly responds to change, and provides training opportunities and career pathways for employment and advancement for all Cenla residents.

In recent years, the Foundation funded over \$2 million in Workforce Opportunity and



Foundation President and CEO Joe Rosier announces a \$2 million grant to expand manufacturing programs at CLTCC campuses.

Healthcare Occupations grants that were used to support Central Louisiana postsecondary institutions in providing training programs for healthcare and technical occupations.

The recent grant to CLTCC “is our second part of that, which is to work on the manufacturing side of the economy,” Rosier said.

The grant dollars will be used to fund a state-of-the-art technical training program with a focus on advanced manufacturing. The goal is to produce graduates for the high-wage, high-demand jobs in the manufacturing sector throughout the region. “Our grant is a vote of confidence but also a challenge to CLTCC leadership and staff,” Rosier said.

CLTCC Chancellor Jimmy Sawtelle said the funding will “enhance the quality of our programs and college. The goal of this investment is to support Cenla’s students, local business and industry, and the community. This well-crafted

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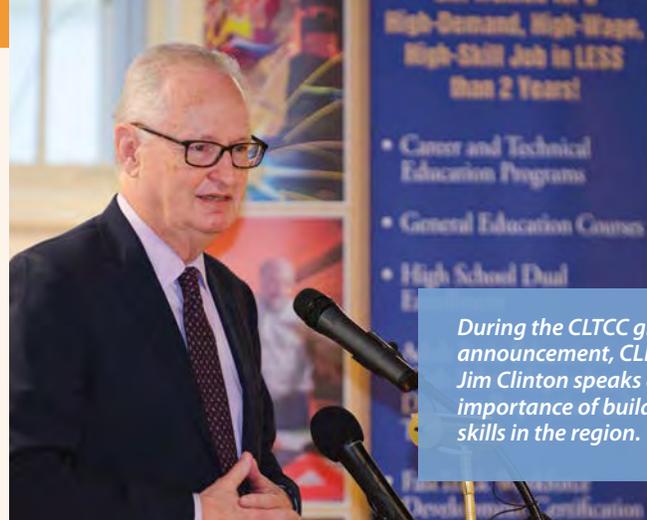
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strategy will positively impact our workforce, economy, and the entire region for years to come.”

Rosier said the Foundation’s Board of Trustees “expects to see significant advancements in program offerings focused on advanced manufacturing, and welding and fabrication, as well as CLTCC’s ability to deliver some of that coursework remotely to help students who have a lack of transportation.”

CLTCC plans to rename its current Manufacturing Training Center the Central Louisiana Manufacturing Technology Center, which will eventually be relocated to downtown Alexandria as part of the new Alexandria Main Campus.

Over the next three years, the college will strengthen the manufacturing core curriculum, create pathways to generate a larger pipeline of students, increase work-based learning opportunities, expand specialized processes for programs such as welding, develop an outreach plan to drive enrollment, and deliver graduates for the high-wage, high-demand, high-skill jobs in the manufacturing sector throughout the Central Louisiana region, Sawtelle said.



During the CLTCC grant announcement, CLEDA President Jim Clinton speaks about the importance of building workforce skills in the region.

Jim Clinton, president of the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance, one of the partners for the manufacturing grant project, credited the Beyond High School discussions with beginning the transformation in the way the community thinks about the region.

“We recognized that we had a tremendous manufacturing opportunity and that manufacturing jobs had a splendid multiplier effect -- that every time we had a manufacturing job, we had other jobs as well. And we recognized that we were going to transform the economy of Central Louisiana,” he said. “These circles keep coming around to the same reality. We have to invest in the knowledge and skills of our people.”



The Rapides Foundation continues a legacy of community healthcare initiated in 1903.

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