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News

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Planning & Economic Development

For Immediate Release

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Sparks fly as new welders are trained with DOL grant money

As part of a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Macomb Community College is partnering with Pro-Weld, Inc. of Chesterfield Township to train and certify new welders. The four-week program is free for qualified students and is designed to build a skilled and ready workforce for area manufacturers, especially those working to fulfill contracts for the U.S. Department of Defense.

The program provides hands-on training as well as employability assistance including resume development, interviewing skills and on-the-job soft skills. Upon completion of the 160-hour program, students have an opportunity to earn American Welding Society (AWS) certification.

Macomb College has a respected welding program in place with a state-of-the-art training facility. However, demand for qualified welders in the region outpaced the college's ability to move students through its program. To better meet need, it sought to partner with the private sector to expand its capacity to offer training.

Pro-Weld worked with Justin Robinson, senior economic specialist with Macomb County Department of Planning & Economic Development to develop a competitive response to the request for proposals. After the college confirmed that Pro-Weld met their training facilities and instructional criteria, the deal was sealed.

"This relationship is a great example of public-private partnership," says Holger Ekanger, WCE Director of Engineering & Advanced Technology for the college. "We had a need to expand our capacity for students and Pro-Weld had a need to fill open positions in their shop with trained welders."

Both the company and college agree that the training offered is top-notch. Manufacturers with a need for welders with precise skills are encouraged to get in touch the college for assistance with job placement needs. A graduation was held in early October for the program's first ten students. Seven of the students had new jobs to begin the following week as a result of participation.

Scott Light, President of Pro-Weld is delighted with the program. "It's hard to imagine that with unemployment just beginning to taper off we had trouble filling critical positions. This program gives us a chance to know our students as potential employees for open positions."

Pro-Weld has classes scheduled every four weeks through August of 2012. Qualified candidates are those with an interest in welding who are unemployed or underemployed. The college screens each applicant for admittance into the program. Those who would like to apply should call 586-498-4120 to get the process started.

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