

CONTACT:

Brian Bolyard, Director of Communications
West Virginia Community and Technical College System
(304)516-3296
bbolyard@wvctcs.org

The Community and Technical College System of West Virginia broke ground today on the North Central Advanced Technology Center.

FAIRMONT, W.Va. – The Community and Technical College System of West Virginia Chancellor Jim Skidmore, Governor Earl Ray Tomblin, U.S. Senator Joe Manchin and Dr. Doreen Larson, President Pierpont Community and Technical College, broke ground on the North Central Advanced Technology Center. Located in the I-79 Technology Park in Marion County, the new facility will have more than 55,000 square feet devoted to delivering the technical training necessary to move West Virginia's economy forward.

“Too many West Virginians and Americans have been unemployed for far too long. West Virginians don't want a handout, they want good jobs with benefits to provide for their families, said Sen. Joe Manchin. “There's nothing compassionate about writing checks to the unemployed without making sure they're also getting the training and education they need to get the jobs that exist now and into the future. Our nation should make sure every man and woman who is physically able to work gets the skills and education they need to get a job. The North Central Advanced Technology Center has a large role to play in making that mission a reality. By working with employers to train workers for jobs that exist right now, this school will give people the skills they need to give their families a better life.”

“When I meet with business leaders interested in West Virginia, one of the first topics discussed is the need for a technically-skilled workforce,” said Governor Earl Ray Tomblin. “The Advanced Technology Center can meet that need by maintaining a ready-to-work workforce with cutting-edge knowledge. In addition, the ability to quickly develop any education and training programs an industry may need will become extremely valuable. ”

The Advanced Technology Center curricula will be based on the modularization model with each course being subdivided into areas of specialization. This model provides opportunities to upgrade skills in specific areas while also allowing students to complete a full program by completing all modules. To ensure that Center programs prepare participants with the skills to meet industry needs, all modules will be developed in cooperation with employers.

“Raising the education attainment rate of our adult population is a solid strategy for advancing economic development efforts. Additional college graduates increase West Virginia's skilled workforce, assist in attracting new industries, and adult learners are less likely to leave the state,” said Chancellor Skidmore. “This new facility will offer programs geared to all learners, and retraining displaced workers providing new career opportunities at home.”

The new laboratory and classroom facilities were planned in collaboration with local industry to ensure students will be prepared to succeed in the workforce. The space will host a learning lab to encourage high school students to enter into technical programs. Likewise, sustainability was a major factor in construction planning to utilize the latest in green technologies to lower operation costs.

“From the beginning, the ATC project has been a story of regional partnerships and cooperation,” said Pierpont President, Dr. Doreen Larson. “The very ground upon which it will be built was donated by one of the region’s leading economic development powerhouses – the West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation. Area businesses and industries have met with us and provided insights into their plans and needs. Pierpont pledges to leverage this new facility to provide flexible, responsive training that leads to good-paying, local jobs and economic development for our region.”

The WVCTCS, comprised of 10 institutions, delivers affordable comprehensive community and technical college education in all regions of West Virginia. The System graduates individuals prepared to meet the demands of employers or succeed in subsequent education. Through collaborating with various community members, the WVCTCS strives to provide high-quality workforce development programs and increase the college-going rate in West Virginia.

Pierpont Community & Technical College specializes in preparing students in two years or less for practical hands-on careers, such as culinary arts, physical therapist assistant, graphic arts, or aviation maintenance. Pierpont offers a variety of types of training, including skill sets, certificates, technical studies (in partnership with career technical education centers in the region), occupational development (in partnership with employers and trade unions), associate degrees, and non-credit training. Studies at Pierpont can also prepare students to continue for 4-year or graduate degree programs.

Pierpont serves a thirteen county region in North Central West Virginia, including Barbour, Braxton, Calhoun, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Taylor and Upshur counties.

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