President's Community-Based Job Training Grants

George C. Wallace State Community College - Hanceville

AWARD AMOUNT: $1,600,606

AREA SERVED: Blount, Cullman, Winston and Morgan Counties, Alabama

INDUSTRY: Advanced Manufacturing

KEY PARTNERS: Two employer partners, three workforce partners, five education partners and two other partners

CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS: This year alone, Alabama automotive industries will produce 800,000 automobiles, and it is projected that 13,200 more jobs will be available in 2005-2025. Four major automotive manufacturers have selected Alabama for production sites with an investment totaling $5.6 billion by 2005. Alabama currently does not have the skilled labor force necessary to provide labor for the anticipated growth. Over 31% of adults in the college's service area do not have a high school diploma, and 94% of adults do not have a four-year college degree. The community must expand its educational offerings and create opportunities for worker training, including transitioning the incumbent workforce to a higher skill level. Wallace State's capacity to adequately educate and train students for careers in the manufacturing industry is constrained by: 1) Lack of training equipment to fully implement a model learning environment for advanced manufacturing; and 2) Lack of space to accommodate large pieces of equipment.

ACTIVITIES: The Alabama Technology Network will design customized, competency-based training and education models to target three distinctive groups of trainees: secondary students preparing for entry into the workforce, unemployed/underemployed workers and incumbent workers. Necessary training equipment will be purchased for a plastics program and for the expansion of industrial electronics programs. The initiative will reach out to Cullman County and City Schools and Cullman Area Career Center to promote career awareness, coordinate industry internships, and provide job shadowing experiences and dual enrollment opportunities.

PROJECTED OUTCOMES:

- 10% increase in the number of high school students enrolling in advanced manufacturing programs each year through increased awareness of careers in the automotive industry;
- 20% increase in the number of unemployed and/or underemployed trainees hired by advanced manufacturing industries during each year of the project;
- 25% increase in employment of graduates with skills certifications in high demand areas;
- 80% of the incumbent worker trainees will receive industry certification;
- 10% increase in the graduation rate for advanced manufacturing programs each year; and
- A higher rate of job retention of trainees completing an employability skills program than those who did not complete the program.