

Press Release

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Patrick County Education Foundation Announces First Career Readiness Certificate Graduates

Seventeen Patrick County residents were honored Thursday evening, December 16, in a **Career Readiness Certificate Program** graduation ceremony held at the Stuart site of Patrick Henry Community College (PHCC). These students were the first in the Southside Virginia region to successfully complete the **Career Readiness Certificate Program**, a worker certification program launched in 2003 under Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner's Workforce Development reforms of his Education for a Lifetime initiative. The Patrick County **Career Readiness Certificate Program** is funded by the Patrick County Education Foundation's Workforce Training Program and is offered at no cost to Patrick County residents through Patrick Henry Community College.

The ceremony honoring the graduates of this first Southside region **Career Readiness Certificate Program** was attended by State Senator W. Roscoe Reynolds, 20th District; Mrs. Crystal Harris, Chairperson of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors; and representatives of the Board of Directors of the Patrick County Education Foundation and the administration of Patrick Henry Community College. Rhonda Hodges, PHCC Workforce Development Coordinator, gave the welcome and introduced guests and Program instructors. Gerald L. Hughes, Executive Director of the Patrick County Education Foundation, delivered opening remarks, thanking and recognizing the

graduates for their hard work and successful completion of the Program. “You are the pioneers in our region’s first **Career Readiness Certificate Program**. Your willingness to take advantage of educational opportunities will encourage other Patrick County residents to do the same. And, as more residents increase their education levels, businesses looking for new locations will want to locate here because of our educated and skilled workforce.”

The presentation of certificates was made by Dr. Nolan Browning, PHCC Vice President of Academic and Student Development, and Lori Kendrick, PHCC Workforce Development Specialist. Graduates received a Career Readiness Certificate signed by Governor Mark R. Warner, a **TekAdvantage** Certificate from the Patrick County Education Foundation and PHCC and a Certificate of Completion from PHCC. Each Career Readiness Certificate recognized the recipient’s level of competency within the Program skill areas.

The Patrick County Education Foundation’s **Career Readiness Certificate Program** is part of Governor Warner’s Education for a Lifetime initiative and the resulting certification is recognized by a number of agencies and employers. The Virginia Career Readiness Certificate was created to assist employers by certifying that a recipient possesses competency skills in Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information that are required by more than 85% of all jobs in the nation. On the back of each certificate is a complete description of the certifying skill levels, what each means and therefore what the recipient can do. It certifies that recipients have the core employability skills required across multiple industries and occupations.

Virginia is working with eleven other states and the District of Columbia to make the Career Readiness Certificate a standard document, recognized across state lines, through a Career Readiness Certificates Consortium. For an employer who may be contemplating moving his or her business to Virginia or expanding an existing company, the skill level of the available workforce is

often a deciding factor,” said Barbara Bolin, Special Advisor to the Governor for Workforce Development. “This new credential can be a powerful economic development tool in the Commonwealth.”

The Career Readiness Program credential is supported by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, the Virginia Manufacturers Association, and the AFL-CIO. A number of Virginia corporations have integrated the Career Readiness Certificate into their employee training and hiring processes. Among these are BWX Technologies Nuclear Products Division in Lynchburg, Celanese Acetate in Narrows, Rex Roto in South Hill, both Northrop Grumman and Siemens VDO Automotive in Newport News and Wyeth Pharmaceuticals in Richmond.

Prior to the development of the Career Readiness Certificate program under Governor Warner, the Patrick County Education Foundation was searching for a program which would provide training and certification as well as documentation of a workforce sufficient to attract new businesses and the jobs they create. With the launch of Governor Warner’s program, the Foundation, in partnership with Patrick Henry Community College, adopted that program and has pledged funding for the first 90 Patrick County students to enroll during the 2004 – 2005 fiscal year.

Persons wishing to for information on future classes of the Career Readiness Certificate Program should call the Stuart site of PHCC at (276) 694-8778. To learn more about the Foundation and its programs, call (276) 694-7233 or visit the Foundation’s website at www.patrickfoundation.net.

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