



For Immediate Release

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TNCC and PCFWD Study Identifies Over 11,000 Upcoming Manufacturing Jobs on the Peninsula

(Hampton, VA) - Today, the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development and Thomas Nelson Community College released *Skills to Succeed Inventory*, a comprehensive study of careers with 14 top Virginia Peninsula manufacturing companies. The companies report they will need 11,500 skilled trades and precision production workers from 2012 to 2016.

The study, funded by the Ford Foundation and Virginia's Community Colleges, is part of the Peninsula Career Pathways Collaborative, a community-wide initiative that includes businesses, public school divisions, adult education centers, the community college, and regional economic and workforce agencies that will build career pathways. It includes skill-specific information on the number of upcoming manufacturing job openings, identifying 11 high-demand occupations.

Skills to Succeed Inventory has been called the most comprehensive study of its kind on the Virginia Peninsula. Instead of relying solely on federal databases, study results were based on confidential one-on-one interviews conducted with Peninsula company executives and manpower planners.

"This is a call to action for our businesses, school divisions, colleges and universities to partner together to build, reengineer and accelerate adult and youth career pathways into these upcoming manufacturing jobs," says the new TNCC President, Dr. John Dever, who with Delegate Matthew James, president of the PCFWD, released the study at the Executive Leadership Summit at TNCC today.

Businesses and educators will convene in work-sessions in November to recommend ways to modify and fund existing pathways and develop new ones to fill workforce educational gaps. "The goal is to customize education and training for different populations, including military veterans, dislocated workers, STEM high school and college students, underemployed workers and young adults seeking technical jobs but lacking a GED and specific skills," says James.

“Working together we can build pathways that are more than on-ramps, but career highways where continuing education and credentials deliver advanced skills and higher wages on the way,” adds Dever.

The 14 participating businesses currently employ 89.9% of the manufacturing workforce in the region. “These major employers took the study very seriously,” says Dr. Deborah Wright, TNCC Vice President of Workforce Development. “To remain competitive, they need a highly skilled workforce to replace retiring workers and meet planned expansions,” says Wright, noting that half of the businesses would maintain at current levels, but half expect to expand business from 8 percent to 25 percent. “This aligns with a recent business report that U.S. manufacturing is strong and getting stronger,” continues Wright.

Wright says this study is the first step in building career pathway and will be followed by strategic planning retreats involving the region’s company supervisors and educators who will validate, re-engineer, and design the career pathways for entry into these jobs and advancement with increasing credentials.

“The report is packed with the most useful information of any workforce development report I have ever seen,” says Steve Maag, president of a national workforce communications firm retained to develop the interactive website with study results accessible to individuals and educators. “It is a lot less theory, and a lot more action.” To view the study, visit www.virginiacareerpathways.org

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