



For Immediate Release
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Hillsborough Community College Brandon Campus Graduates High-Tech Manufacturing Production Workers

Tampa – This past Friday at the Hillsborough Community College Brandon Campus “Production Technician Certification” became the mantra for a group of students graduating from HCC’s new “Manufacturing Fundamentals for the Entry-Level Worker” training program.

“Production technician certification is more than just a mantra though,” Dr. Eric Roe, principal investigator of the Employ Florida Banner Center for Manufacturing at HCC Brandon, said. “This nationally recognized industry certification is going to have a vast impact on Florida’s manufacturing community and its workforce and the state’s economy.

“The Manufacturing Skill Standards Council’s, or MSSC, production technician certification is a new and essential tool to help raise the bar for manufacturing production technician education and training. The technicians we graduated today now have a high-tech foundation with which to improve their productivity and provide a major contribution to the expansion of Florida’s manufacturing industries.”

Funded by a Workforce Florida grant, the Employ Florida Banner Center for Manufacturing is a public-private consortium. The five partner community colleges and manufacturing companies in the consortium developed the new training program this year and delivered it to a cohort of almost 100 students in five counties. The program is aligned with the new MSSC production technician

competencies: manufacturing production and processes, safety, maintenance awareness, and quality and continuous improvement.

“This is a major breakthrough for Florida’s high-stakes manufacturing industries,” Dr. Carlos Soto, HCC Brandon Campus President, said. “The manufacturing companies who are members of the Banner Center consortium have supported us in the development and delivery of this new training program. Now, they will be able to reap the benefits of this effort.”

Representatives from Tampa Bay Area manufacturing/staffing companies attended Friday’s graduation ceremony. There to meet the newly trained technicians and initiate recruitment efforts to fill entry-level production worker vacancies, they acknowledged the importance of the Banner Center training program and the graduates who were about to become part of Florida’s manufacturing workforce.

Lydia Babilonia, human resource generalist, DRS Technologies, said, “I was part of the Banner Center’s curriculum focus group effort, and it’s great to see the results of the project and how it produced such a high-skilled talent pool.”

“Trying to find qualified and motivated employees is a constant challenge,” Ellen Donegan, recruiting specialist, Tampa Armature Works, remarked. “The Banner Center has just lessened that challenge for our high-performance, globally competitive companies in the state.”

“I’m very grateful to the Banner Center and HCC for this program,” Sarah Odom, human resource manager, Tampa Bay Steel, said. “We always need employees that have these core production skills.”

Shawn Hopper, production manager, DRS Technologies, said, “As a defense contractor, we’re building mission critical components for the Army and their operations in Iraq. So we’re looking for qualified people who take their careers seriously, and these new technicians fit the bill.”

“Our corporate clients need people who are committed to lifelong learning,” Lauren Cappelluti, marketing representative, ETS Staffing, said. “Today’s graduates have just demonstrated that commitment by dedicating themselves to this three-week, intensive training program along with taking the new industry certification examination.”

Friday’s graduates join the other partner community college’s graduates to become Florida’s newly trained and certified “industrial athletes of the future.”

For more information about the Banner Center and its training programs, contact Edward Allen, manager, Employ Florida Banner Center for Manufacturing at (813) 259-6574 or email: eallen6@hccfl.edu.

Hillsborough Community College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, Telephone 404-679-4501) to award associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates.

Hillsborough Community College serves more than 40,000 students on campuses on Dale Mabry Highway and in Ybor City, Plant City and Brandon. HCC also serves students at learning centers on MacDill Air Force Base and in Ruskin. HCC was the recipient of the 2006 Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Equity award.