

# SCC receives \$1.7 million energy technology grant

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CARNEYS POINT TWP. - Salem Community College has been awarded a \$1.7 million federal grant to provide workforce development in the area of nuclear energy technology and sustainable energy technology.

The community-based job training grant from the U.S. Department of Labor will allow SCC to work closely with PSEG Nuclear and Energy Freedom Pioneers to provide and associate's in applied science degrees in both nuclear and sustainable energy.

Funds for the grant will be available in April.

"The grant provides a tremendous opportunity to create degree programs with our partners in nuclear energy technology and sustainable energy technology," said President of SCC Dr. Peter B. Contini.

The partnership with PSEG Nuclear in Lower Alloways Creek and Salem and Energy Freedom Pioneers in Oldmans Township will allow students to not only get textbook education on these subjects, but hands-on experience for immediate employment after graduation.

"These programs have great job potential and will assist in Salem County's economic development," said Contini. "Clearly, the broad-based partnerships played a key role in the award of the grant."

Programs in sustainable energy allow students to get involved in the ever-growing green energy movement. Students will learn technical skills in the areas of solar, biodiesel, wind and anaerobic digestion.

"Energy Freedom Pioneers concentration is to reach out to the community and provide jobs in the field of green energy," said Brian Blair, president Energy Freedom Pioneers. "Our tenets will be able to providing cutting edge technology for the students."

The funds given to SCC will also help boost a fledging program in nuclear technology at the community college.

Upon launching the Energy Utility Technology program in 2008, PSEG has been working with others in the nuclear industry and with the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO) and the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) to develop a standardized nuclear training curriculum that could be taught by community colleges nationwide.

This will allow nuclear plant operators to hire graduates out of multiple programs with confidence of consistent training.

'Obviously, this can help us to develop people we can hire," said Anndria Gaerity, director of nuclear development for PSEG. "But we are also looking to give scholarships for 10 of the students, and provide a paid internship at the plant in the summer."

Students graduating in this field are expected to earn an average \$72,000 a year, Gaerity said.

The award of the grant was announced by U.S Rep. Frank A. LoBiondo, R-2nd Dist. Along with the \$1.7 million for Salem Community College, Atlantic Cape Community College will receive \$1.2 million for job training programs focused on geospatial technology.

"As the economy continues to struggle and finding work grows increasingly difficult, effective job training programs must be utilized to their fullest potential to give workers a leg up on the competition," said LoBiondo. "Community colleges have long been successful in giving their students a solid educational foundation in which to build their careers."

Partners involved in the development of these new programs include PSEG Power, LLC, the Center for Energy Workforce Development, Energy Freedom Pioneers, Salem County high school districts, Salem County One-Stop Career Center, Ranch Hope/Strang School and the Calvary Community Development Corp.