

New training programs could put some back to work

by Nancy Hogland

Laid-off welders who want to return to work in a stable environment could have the opportunity to do that thru the Center of Workforce Excellence in Advanced Manufacturing with Robotic Welding Technology, a new program offered at Ozarks Technical Community College (OTC).

The seven-week, 200-hour program, offered as a public-private partnership between OTC and Detroit Tool Metal Products Company of Lebanon, will directly support job training for 250 new jobs created for the plant expansion.

“Detroit Tool Metal Products made the decision to relocate from Ft. Madison, Iowa to Lebanon. This created 250 new jobs for advanced heavy plate welding and robotic welding. Because most of the welders in this area don’t have this type of experience, to meet the company’s hiring demands OTC is offering an accelerated job training to provide the skills needed,” said Dawn Busick, executive director of the college’s Center for Workforce Development.

Detroit Tool Metal Products fabricates custom metal parts, subassemblies, and precision metal products to serve a broad range of markets including agricultural equipment, construction equipment, truck/trailer/oil-field equipment, heating/air conditioning and appliance equipment.

Busick said the program, the first of its kind in the Midwest, will provide advanced heavy plate welding and manufacturing robotic welding job training course work as well as instruction on topics such as leadership, team building,

blue print reading, safety/OSHA regulations, welding inspections and engineering fixture analysis. The accelerated program will be taught in two sessions – one in the morning and another in the afternoon. One class has been completed, another began in early October and if there are enough applicants, a third class will be held before the end of the year.

“The company needs 75 employees by this December, another 75 by May and 75 more by December 2010. Jobs will pay wages of between \$12 and \$15.75 per hour depending on the type of welding done so this is an opportunity for welders who lost their jobs thru the Eldon plant closings and other businesses that closed due to the economic downturn to get back to work at a decent wage,” she said, adding that those who are interested could apply for the scholarship money made available thru the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 grants to the Eldon, Camdenton and Versailles Career Centers.

“That’s what that money is for – to provide job training for displaced and laid-off workers. I looked at the Missouri database and saw that there are 2,000 out-of-work welders. Thru this program, many of those workers could go through this program, skill up and acquire employment,” Busick said.

According to James R. Dickerson, director of the Workforce Development Division of the Missouri Career Center in Camdenton, the state’s seven centers, which serve 19 different Missouri counties, have a total of \$3.5 million to dole out. Counselors also may be able to assist students in obtaining additional

scholarship funding to pay for any items not covered through the Stimulus money.

Busick said OTC is also offering another job training accelerated program for Missouri Home Auditor Certification. This course is designed to meet the certification standards required by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to conduct energy audits.

“This is a new program as well. The Community Action

Agencies will be working with the DNR to create 500 home auditor positions throughout the state. This training is specifically for the purpose of training people to fill those jobs,” she said, adding that all the training offered through the accelerated program will be tied to jobs on the other end. “This program is totally different than anything we’ve done before. It’s not semester based – it’s intense, job-specific training designed to quickly impart a chunk of

information so workers can fill positions.”

Training will consist of 24 hours classroom instruction, 12 hours of field training and 4 hours of test preparation.

Students should already have basic building knowledge or construction experience.

For more information on the programs, call OTC at 417-447-8901 or visit www.otc.edu/workforce. For more information on scholarship money, visit one of the Career Centers.

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