



For Immediate Release

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Patrick & Henry Community College and Wytheville Community College Receive G3 Grant to Expand Power Line Training Program into Patrick County

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) and Wytheville Community College (WCC) have been awarded a \$750,000 Virginia G3 (Get a Skill, Get a Job, Get Ahead) Innovation grant to expand WCC's highly successful Power Line Worker Training program into Patrick County.

"We're excited to continue and expand our collaboration with Wytheville Community College. We began our partnership with WCC several years ago with our CDL and Electrical Groundswoker programs, but were delayed due to the pandemic," said Rhonda Hodges, Vice-President of Workforce, Economic, and Community Development at P&HCC. "This short-term training program will provide students with the skills needed for family-sustaining careers with a lot of potential for growth in our area."

Virginia's Fast Forward programs - such as the Power Line Worker Training Program - help students pay for short-term training that leads to industry-recognized certifications, licenses, and ultimately, high-paying jobs. Students enrolled in the Power Line Worker program train for 14 weeks to gain certifications and the skills to become successful power line workers. Skills that these students learn include electrical theory, aerial framing, rigging, safety, commercial truck driving, and the use of utility service equipment.

The Stuart Rotary Club approved the use of Rotary Field in Stuart last week. The Patrick County Board of Supervisors currently lease the Rotary Field facilities and on Monday, the Board approved the field to be used as the training site for the training. Electrical poles and related equipment will be placed on the site to provide students with a realistic learning environment. Funds from the G3 Innovation grant will be used to purchase needed equipment and for other training costs.

Perry Hughes, WCC Vice-President of Workforce and Occupational Programs, oversees the Wytheville power line program, and says, "WCC is excited to partner with Patrick & Henry Community College to expand the Power Line Worker Training program currently offered at WCC into Patrick County. We appreciate Patrick & Henry Community College, the Rotary Club of Stuart, Virginia, the Patrick County Board of Supervisors, and American Electric Power (AEP) for their support. Upon completion of this project, WCC and P&HCC will be increasing

the number of graduates who will be trained to enter into the high wage, high demand field of power line workers.”

Since WCC’s Power Line Worker Training program’s inception in 2017, eleven groups of students have completed the program and received the training and certifications necessary to become successful power line workers.

The first class to be trained in Patrick County is tentatively scheduled to begin in the fall of 2023. For more information about enrolling in the program, contact Perry Hughes (WCC) at phughes@wcc.vccs.edu or Rhonda Hodges (P&HCC) at rhodges@patrickhenry.edu.

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Patrick & Henry Community College

Randy Ferguson | Marketing & Media Director | 276.656.0229

Wytheville Community College

Deanna Bradberry | Public Relations & Development Coordinator | 276.620.4986