

**ILLINOIS
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
BOARD**

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois Community Colleges Celebrate National Career and Technical Education Month

Roughly two-thirds of all community college graduates earned a CTE degree or certificate

SPRINGFIELD – Career and Technical Education (CTE) plays a vital role in meeting workforce demands by preparing individuals for high-skill, in-demand jobs that further Illinois’ global competitiveness. Last year roughly two-thirds (66.9%) of all Illinois community college graduates earned a CTE degree or certificate. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will join others across the nation during the month of February to celebrate national Career and Technical Education Month. This year’s theme is Opportunities for Career Success!

Illinois has seen continued growth and demand for postsecondary CTE in both higher completion rates and increased program offerings. Since fiscal year 2011, overall, CTE graduates have increased approximately 12 percent at Illinois’ community colleges. To meet workforce demands, 615 new CTE programs were approved last year at community colleges across the state.

“Career and technical education programs are at the core of the community college’s mission to provide educational opportunities tailored to local business and industry needs,” said ICCB executive director Dr. Karen Hunter Anderson. “By partnering with local, regional and national employers, CTE programs are investing in students and providing them with the latest technology and skills that will prepare them to become successful employees and future leaders.”

Innovative business and industry partnership flourish across the Illinois community college system. For example, the City Colleges of Chicago’s Kennedy-King College (Chicago) has partnered with NASCAR’s Diversity Program to allow students in the Automotive Collision Technology program the opportunity to learn about careers in the professional racing industry. At Illinois Central College (East Peoria), students were given the opportunity to meet with

representatives from Caterpillar, Inc., CEFCU, Facet Technologies, OneFire, and Ishphi Information Technologies about apprenticeship programs. The College highlighted its partnerships with area employers to create middle-class jobs in high-demand fields such as manufacturing, healthcare and IT, and to encourage other local businesses to support and offer apprenticeship opportunities to students.

In partnership with *Ethanol Producer* journal, Southeastern Illinois College (Harrisburg) has continued to gain momentum in the revitalization its Biofuels Program. The College has created five certificates and one associate in applied science degree program and plans to take the Biofuels Program to the next level using cutting-edge competency-based curriculum designed to provide industry training for the under- and unemployed. At McHenry County College (Crystal Lake) the Occupational Therapy Assistant program joined with Autumn Leaves, a residential memory care provider, to develop a horticulture therapy program. The program allows residents of the facility to receive therapy through cultivating crops.

The Illinois Community College Board is the state coordinating board for community colleges. Illinois is home to 48 community colleges in 39 districts and has the third largest community college system in the nation serving close to 1 million residents each year in credit and non-credit courses.

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