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A work-based curriculum

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MARION - A new automotive manufacturing curriculum will give local workers the skills needed to fill a growing demand for workers.

The Automotive Manufacturing Technical Education Collaborative, founded in 2005, recently released a national core curriculum in Dearborn, Mich., that focuses on teaching the technical skills needed to work in auto manufacturing plants. The curriculum, to be taught locally by Tri-Rivers Career Center and Marion Technical College faculty, will give the students the skills needed to work for any auto manufacturer and many of their suppliers.

"Every auto company in the world belongs to that," said Tri-Rivers Career Center instructor Ritch Ramey, who attended the unveiling of the curriculum. He said the certification students will earn by going through the training will "travel" with them. It will benefit them regardless of which company is seeking workers.

Tri-Rivers and MTC are partners with Honda of America Manufacturing, which reached out to the schools to help fill a demand for skilled workers in Marysville and its other plants. The curriculum will be taught locally at the new Robotics and Advanced Manufacturing Technology Education Collaborative facility to be built at Tri-Rivers Career Center.

Ramey, Tri-Rivers Center for Adult Education director Richard George, MTC dean of engineering technologies Dave Wagner and MTC engineering technologies instructor Ken Belk attended the unveiling Aug. 8 at Henry Ford Community College. George compared the curriculum to what's been done in nursing, in which nurses helped create a national certification exam to test for skills that employees need to have.

"I think it's the way education should be because it's industry-driven," he said. "These are the skills that employers need."

George said it will be modular-based, meaning it will be useful to students ranging from those with no auto manufacturing skills to those already employed who need more training.

Wagner said conversations leading to the local connection with AMTEC started in January when Honda of America, already a big supporter of Marion's robotics programs, sought help building a skilled workforce.

The manufacturer, like others, is in need of qualified technicians.

He said Honda discovered that the AMTEC curriculum included many of the skills it identified as necessary.

Wagner said this is only part of how RAMTEC, once built, will benefit local manufacturers including Honda suppliers. He said the college has had discussions with other companies including Nucor Steel Marion, Inc. and the Wilson Bohannon Lock Co.

The robotics training facility will be a partnership between Tri-Rivers, MTC and The Ohio State University at Marion. Ramey said the partnerships with Honda and AMTEC will eventually include ways to promote manufacturing that will reach down through high school and all the way into elementary schools.

"There's a lot more to come," Ramey said. "This is going to be huge for Marion."

It is also among a number of changes planned for Tri-Rivers, which is also launching a veterinary assistance program this coming school year. Students are learning about the changes as the career center prepares to start the school year on Tuesday.

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Art caption: Precision Machine Technology instructor Scott Jones tells new students and their parents that high-paying jobs in computer-aided manufacturing are awaiting graduates who make the best of their opportunities at Tri-Rivers Career Center.

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