

The Times

Pittsburgh Technical College launches initiative for region's changing workforce

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NORTH FAYETTE TWP. — Responding to the region's growth in energy, advanced manufacturing and green construction, Pittsburgh Technical College has announced a national engagement initiative to meet the area's changing workforce needs.

"Our regional economy is evolving rapidly around advanced industries that are changing the nature of our workforce," PTC President Alicia Harvey-Smith said in a statement. "There is an immediate need to tap into a national network that will help our region sustain the education and placement of job-ready graduates who are prepared to make an immediate workforce impact."

One of the main drivers in the area's energy industry is, of course, Shell Chemicals' \$6 billion ethane cracker plant being built in Potter Township. The project has drawn several thousand workers to Beaver County and the surrounding area, and expectations are that it will serve as an anchor for economic growth for several decades.

Jennifer Donovan, the director of enrollment marketing for the North Fayette Township-based PTC, said the region "is experiencing a significant growth in the energy sector due to the abundance of shale in the Marcellus formation. This growth has drawn significant investment from global firms, like Royal Dutch Shell."

Donovan said PTC's students are attracting the attention of companies making investments in the region.

"Graduates from the PTC's schools of design and engineering technology, energy and electronics technology, and trade technology are actively being recruited even prior to graduation," she said, adding that the reason is the school works with businesses to align its curriculum with industry needs.

Donovan said PTC has partnered with 155 companies in Beaver County alone.

After taking over as PTC president on July 1, Harvey-Smith decided that developing a national network was “an immediate priority,” according to the school’s statement. As part of the effort, PTC said that Harvey-Smith would use her experience as a national speaker to establish an engagement team that would speak at national conferences, organizations and employers.

“Last year, 96 percent of our available graduates were placed in their field of study, and the demand is growing,” Harvey-Smith said. “This is a formula that we need to share. A proven path to address our changing workforce has been quietly succeeding in the suburbs of Pittsburgh.”