

Governor Pritzker Celebrates State-Of-The-Art Advanced Manufacturing Training Center At Heartland College

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NORMAL – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today joined Heartland Community College to celebrate the ribbon cutting of its new state-of-the-art Advanced Manufacturing Training Center. Funded in part by a \$7.5 million capital grant as part of the state's larger \$15 million manufacturing training academy investment, the electric vehicle manufacturing training facility prepares students to meet the growing needs of the Illinois' expanding EV industry.

“Programs such as Heartland’s represent the best of Illinois’ commitment to investing in and educating the next generation of workers,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “That’s why my administration pledged \$15 million to open these centers and why my FY25 budget proposes another \$24 million—Illinois must be ready for the jobs of the future.”

Heartland's electric vehicle manufacturing program – which launched at a temporary site in August 2021 – provides students with training, certificates, and degrees in Electric Vehicle (EV) and Energy Storage (ES) Technology. The program also provides intensive upskill Electric Vehicle Technology Certificates for individuals with prior traditional automotive training and experience. Additionally, the facility will provide a space for state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing programs in robotics, renewable energy, and automation.

“The State of Illinois is investing in the clean energy jobs of the future through its support of Heartland Community College’s state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing training facility,” said DCEO Director Kristin Richards. “Together, we’re opening the doors to opportunities for Illinois’ world-class workforce by providing them with the tools to pursue meaningful careers in the clean energy industry and beyond.”

The new 45,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility supported approximately 200 construction jobs. The facility incorporates remodeled space to further support programs such as robotics, HVAC, welding, and digital media, in addition to the newly constructed State Farm EV Lab.

“As the makeup of our regional workforce has changed so has the need for specialized skill training,” said Heartland Community College President Keith Cornille. “This Advanced Manufacturing Center supports degree-oriented and short-term programs in vital Career Technical Education areas. This is the work-ready skill training that leads to in-demand jobs. Eighty percent of Heartland graduates in career programs find employment. By expanding these educational pathways, we will help students find a job, have an opportunity to upskill for a better job, and a career.”

The training program exemplifies partnership between businesses, regional and local economic development organizations, and education partners – creating a true ecosystem designed to provide training in areas that grow our workforce and meet the needs of area industries, such as EV manufacturer Rivian.

“As a leader in clean energy, the State of Illinois is prioritizing preparing our regional workforce for local jobs in the clean energy economy,” said Assistant Majority Leader Dave Koehler (D-Peoria). “By investing in Heartland Community College’s Electric Vehicle Energy Storage training facility, the State is giving students access to

specialized skill training while showing them the vast number of clean energy career opportunities available right here in Illinois.”

“The State’s \$7.5 million investment in Heartland’s Manufacturing Training Academy will help prepare Central Illinois’ workforce for clean energy careers,” said Rep. Sharon Chung (D-Bloomington). “As our region continues to grow in the clean energy space, Heartland Community College is making sure local students have the knowledge and skills to thrive in the clean energy and manufacturing industries.”

Illinois' investment in the electric vehicle manufacturing training program is part of the State's larger strategy of building a clean energy economy and growing the EV ecosystem. As part of these efforts, Illinois has invested in unique partnerships that grow jobs and provide opportunities for businesses to collaborate. The state has also invested \$7.5 million in a similar training facility at Metro East’s Southwestern Illinois College. Governor Pritzker’s FY25 budget includes an additional \$24 million for manufacturing training academies to expand programs like Heartland’s across the state.

Through the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA), Illinois is building a first-of-its kind statewide clean energy jobs training program through approximately \$180 million in investments per year designed to bolster Illinois' qualified and diverse workforce in the clean energy and EV sectors while supporting communities.