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Mesa Community College Receives Grant to Build Capacity to Serve the Advanced Manufacturing Industry

Mesa Community College January 15, 2014

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The Arizona Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AZ-AMI) of Mesa Community College received a \$2.5-million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration to provide trade-impacted workers and others with the knowledge, skills and abilities required to provide long-term support to aerospace and advanced manufacturing industries in the region. The Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCT) Grant provided \$2,507,462 (100 percent of the project funds) to build the college's capacity to meet the training and educational needs of the expanding manufacturing sector in the east valley.

"By specifically targeting advanced manufacturing, an industry vital to Maricopa County, the AZ-AMI programs are directly correlated to the goals and strategies outlined in the Governor's Integrated Workforce Development Plan for 2012-16," said Rebecca Gau, director of Education Innovation for the Office of the Governor.

"We are very pleased that MCC has received this grant award to provide training for such an important part of our economy," Mesa Mayor Scott Smith said. "Advanced manufacturing is a central part of Mesa's HEAT initiative and one of my priorities as president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

"We know more than half of the pool of TAA-impacted workers, individuals whose jobs were moved overseas, have manufacturing experience but do not have a post-secondary degree or certificate currently required by employers. By building upon a worker's prior experience and certifying nationally-recognized credentials, individuals will be better positioned for the current and future manufacturing industry," said Shouan Pan, Ph.D, president of Mesa Community College.

Input from advisory committees, derived from partnerships with the Arizona Manufacturing Partnership, the Science Foundation of Arizona, the Arizona Commerce Authority and other industry partners, will provide current and relevant content for AZ-AMI's classrooms and laboratories. AZ-AMI will also blend innovation and established best practices from other TAACCT-funded programs to accelerate progress for participants while providing industry-relevant, stackable learning opportunities to meet the growing demand for qualified technicians in Maricopa County. The grant will be used to enhance current curriculum and laboratory equipment, develop a pre-employment boot camp for advanced manufacturing industries (aerospace, automotive, engineering, electronics and welding), and increase awareness of the career opportunities available in these industries while developing pathways for the next generation workforce.

Knowing there is an immediate and long-term need for qualified individuals in advanced manufacturing, AZ-AMI, parallel with this grant, will establish dual credit partnerships with local high schools for welding programs, and upon MCC obtaining appropriate certifications the local Joint Technical Education Districts (JTED) high schools will be able to allow dual credit for machining. Another partner, the Arizona Precision Manufacturing Apprenticeship Program (AzPMAP), will handle the pre-apprenticeship qualifications and provide apprentice training.

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