GET READY FOR WINTER SEMESTER

GET IT DONE

GRANT WILL INCREASE ACCESS TO
LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCE AND FUND OUTREACH

Kalamazoo Valley Community College has received $271,058 federal grant to support local food production and specialty crops.

This grant is intended to expand markets for local ranchers and other growers across the country through five grant programs. The Kalamazoo Valley Community College’s Food Innovation Center (KVCC) is one of the recipients in the state of Michigan and one of 44 projects nationwide to receive funds. This plays a significant role in supporting students and graduates who go to work with these partners.

The grant will support the development and expansion of local and regional food businesses to increase domestic access and consumption of locally and regionally produced agricultural products. It will also enable the development of new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets.

Additionally, Ryan Hamilton, KVCC’s Food Innovation Center, encourages students and graduates who go to work with these partners to take part in this initiative.

For more information about this special event and how to apply to the college and register for classes visit www.kvcc.edu/register. The event is free and open to the community.
KALAMAZOO VALLEY’S WIND TURBINE TECHNICIAN ACADEMY: GENDER, RACE, AND OCCUPATIONAL DIVERSITY

Kalamazoo Valley’s Wind Turbine Technician Academy (WTTA) provides students with a fast track to high demand jobs in an exciting field. With the push in this country to generate 20 percent of its electrical wind by 2030, the demand for highly trained technicians will only increase as one wind turbine technician is needed for every ten turbines. Wind turbine technicians install, inspect, troubleshoot, and repair wind turbine components.

Kalamazoo Valley’s WTTA program is the nation’s leading training program for wind turbine technicians. Focused on specific, hands-on competencies, the unique training model moves students from the classroom to the learning labs and into the field quickly. The non-credit, full-time program allows graduates to be job-ready in less than six months. Students attend class Monday through Friday, eight hours each day for 24 weeks. The academy also employs a call technician to accompany a wind instructor to turbines if a problem occurs on a weekend.

Tom Sutton serves as Kalamazoo Valley’s director of wind energy and technical services. He studied aircraft engineering and earned an automotive engineering technology degree from Western Michigan University. He worked for Harold Zeigler Lincoln/Mercury as a senior master technician, and later worked with Ford Field Engineering. He taught at WMU as an adjunct engineering faculty member before coming to Kalamazoo Valley College 12 years ago.

In addition to his roles as an administrator and trainer for the WTTA, Sutton is a senior trainer for Wisconsin-based ENSA North America, the nation’s premier wind-turbine training organization. He travels internationally to train other wind energy trainers. He is also on the steering committee for the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) and is active with the Workforce Development Committee and chair of the Operations and Maintenance subcommittee. Internationally, Sutton is a member of the International Technical Committee where he works to develop the international training standards for worker safety.

A wide variety of students have enrolled in the WTTA since it first opened in November 2009. Students in the current class include Josh Trudgeon, who is funding his studies with a Kalamazoo Promise scholarship, an Army Veteran Zachary Trinkle who is utilizing the G.I. Bill to pay for tuition, and Niles native Kaitlyn McDonald is the only woman in the current class. She loves the hands-on work and is mechanically inclined.

Trudgeon said it was easy to use the Kalamazoo Promise to cover his tuition. “Going through high school, the process is organized in such a way to apply,” he said. “I think the hardest part was I had to email the Promise Program Manager at Kalamazoo Valley, Monteze Morales, and schedule a meeting to talk about what I wanted to do and how to get it done right. From there it was all good. They made it really easy.”

Trudgeon attended Michigan Tech for a year before working in carpentry and as an electrician. He has loved the training so far. He enjoys electrical work and decided that it would be even more exciting atop a wind turbine. “Every day is a new challenge,” he said. “It keeps me engaged and excited.”

Trinkle, from Buffalo, New York, is using the benefits of his G.I. Bill to help pay the 14,000 tuition fee. The program for Trinkle was also very simple, but he still recommends that veterans have all their documentation in order and that they be organized to save time and help prevent mishaps. Trinkle says he chose Kalamazoo Valley’s wind program because “it has been around longer than others and has more available certifications.”

Trinkle is impressed with the academy so far. “I like it a lot. It’s very fast-paced. It can seem overwhelming, but they give you plenty of time to catch up. And you’re never really alone. If someone is struggling, then more than likely there is someone who is in the same boat. You can move at your own pace, but still have a certain number of days to get things done.” In addition to his military experience, Trinkle had attended college before, “I’ve learned more here in the past three months than I learned in four and a half years of college,” he said. “The course does a good job of building off of itself.”

Women are also making great strides within the industry. The program encourages hands-on, mechanically inclined women such as McDonald to join them as wind technicians. McDonald is due to graduate in December, but has already had two job interviews with companies within the industry and is currently waiting to set up a third interview.

When asked if she was intimidated to enter a field where men dominate she said, “Yes and no. I grew up with an older brother so I was always around the guys. I’ve always worked in the shops and took three years of automotive classes in high school so being around the guys is natural for me. But, it does get intimidating because you get those guys who say ‘oh you’re a girl, you can’t do the same as me’.” One of her biggest concerns is being hired based on her skill, not gender.

“I don’t want to be chosen because I’m a woman in a man’s industry. I want to be chosen because I have the skills to do the job they need me to do and I have the work ethic they want,” she said.

Program Coordinator Delia Baker said the academy is ideal for students who are mechanically inclined or have a background in electrical technology. We look for experience that can be verified by a reference,” Baker said. “We need to know that people are good with their hands. The training is fast-paced so students need to be self-directed. Most students quickly become comfortable working at heights, which is a must since the wind turbines are more than 300 feet tall. A passion for travel also makes the job enticing for many, including Trudgeon. “I’m excited to travel and fix wind turbines and to work with renewable energy - giving energy to people from something that’s free,” he said.

The Wind Turbine Technician Academy runs for six months with the next academy starting January 3, 2019. Classes are small with only 12 students and are held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information, contact CAREercareeracademies@kvcc.edu or visit https://www.kvcc.edu/academics/wind.
A pill-soring robot, ballet dancers, a CPR mannequin and farm animals will be among the hundreds of interactive exhibits under one roof as part of an experiential career investigation event Nov. 13 - 14 for area eighth-graders.

MCCareerQuest Southwest, sponsored by Kalamazoo Regional Educational Services Agency (KRESA), invites students from Kalamazoo and Calhoun County school districts to talk with experts in a variety of fields while learning to operate and work with the actual tools, equipment and technology. Five thousand students are expected to attend the two-day event held at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center in Kalamazoo.

More than 70 local businesses and post-secondary partners — including Kalamazoo Valley Community College — will fill the 50,000 square feet of exhibit space to showcase careers in four different career pathways:

- Arts & Communication
- Business, Technology & Human Services
- Engineering & Manufacturing
- Health & Natural Sciences

According to a 2015 Skills Gap report by Deloitte, nearly 37.5 million baby boomers will retire over the next decade and only 21 million workers will enter the workforce to replace them. MC CareerQuest Southwest addresses this impending workforce shortage by encouraging youth to consider careers in industries they might not have previously considered.

Kalamazoo Valley will be front and center with information and interactive displays in a variety of in-demand fields, according to Patricia Henning, dean of health careers and director of nursing at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Programs represented include EMR/paramedic, dental hygiene, respiratory care as well as some of the college’s Career Academies.

“MC CareerQuest continues to be a great opportunity for all of these young students to learn more about the career programs and training available at Kalamazoo Valley Community College,” said Henning.

The college’s dental hygiene program department, for example, will have a dental simulator (a head with teeth and cheeks), dental operator stool, and dental light at the event, according to Dental Hygiene Program Director Kimberly Grubka.

“The students will have the opportunity to sit at the simulator with gloves and safety glasses on and use a mouth mirror and probe to look inside the simulator’s mouth,” Grubka said.

The dental hygiene program prepares students to become registered dental hygiene practitioners. Students must complete one year of prerequisite courses prior to applying to the dental hygiene program. Graduates of this program are granted an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree and are eligible to take the National Board Exam in Dental Hygiene and the Regional or State Licensing Exams.

The college’s Career Academies, which include Wind Turbine, CNC Operator and Mechatronic Technician, will also have a presence at the event. PVC wind turbines, a desktop CNC mill and robotic arm will all be available for students to manipulate, according to Ben Ash, instructional manager for mechatronics at the college.

“There are a lot of really great, high paying career opportunities in the trades,” Ash said. “We want to open kids’ eyes and expose them to these opportunities.”

Career Academies, Ash explained, are skill-focused, employer-driven training programs that prepare students for in-demand jobs in growing and diversified industries. In addition to the industrial trade academies, Kalamazoo Valley offers a Police Officer Training, Corrections Officer Training, Phlebotomy Technician and Patient Care academies.

As part of their visit to MC CareerQuest Southwest, students can also learn more about the Early College Program. The program allows students to earn an associate degree or certificate by completing a fifth year of high school with little or no expense. Students delay high school graduation for one year while they take college courses at Kalamazoo Valley. Tuition and fees are paid by the local school district up to the state allowed amount. Early College expands on dual enrollment, and builds upon classes already offered through Education for Employment (EFE) and Education for the Arts (EFA).

Dr. Deborah Coates, Kalamazoo Valley’s dean of instruction - Early College, will be on hand to talk with students who are interested in participating.

Early College, Coates explained, is designed to help students get a head start on whatever they decide to do after graduating from high school, whether that’s going into the workforce or continuing on with their education.

“Education is evolving and this is part of it. Early College prepares students for the world and makes sure they have as many options as possible,” Coates said. “Early College is a great opportunity — academically and economically — for students in the area.”

Nearly 450 area students are enrolled in Kalamazoo Valley’s Early College program. There are currently more than 100 Early College programs in Michigan.

Kalamazoo Valley’s Early College program offers transfer Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees to many Michigan colleges and universities as well as Associate of Applied Science degrees and a number of certificate programs.

The Kalamazoo County Expo Center is located at 2000 Lake Street in Kalamazoo.

For more information, visit www.mccareerquestsw.org and www.kvcc.edu.

KALAMAZOO VALLEY'S VISITING WRITER SERIES

An impressive list of authors are included in this year’s Visiting Writer Series. All Visiting Writer events are open to the public and take place in the Student Commons Theater, Room 4240, at the college’s Township Campus. Craft talks begin at 10 a.m. and readings are held at 2:15 p.m.

On Tuesday, Nov. 13, authors Thibe Nisen and Jay Baron Niccolo will visit campus. Nissen is an associate professor in the Department of English at Western Michigan University. Her husband, Niccolo, is also an author and has taught at Eckerd College, Emerson College, and Western Michigan University.


Poet, essay and nonfiction writer Aimee Nezhukumatathil visits on Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2019. During the 2016-17 academic year, Nezhukumatathil was the John and Renee Grisham Writer-in-Residence at The University of Mississippi. She is now professor of English and teaches environmental literature and poetry writing in the MFA program at the University of Mississippi.

Kalamazoo native Bonnie Jo Campbell is the last speaker in this year’s series. She'll visit Kalamazoo Valley on Tuesday, Mar. 19 and Wednesday, Mar. 20 and students across campus will read Campbell’s book “Once Upon a River.”

Campbell is the author of the National Bestselling novel “Once Upon a River” (Norton, 2011), a river odyssey with an unforgettable 16-year-old heroine, which the “New York Times” book review calls “an excellent American parable about the consequences of our favorite ideal, freedom.” Campbell's critically-acclaimed short fiction collection "American Salvage" (Wayne State University Press, 2009) was finalist for the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle’s Award. The collection consists of 14 lush and rowdy stories of folks who are struggling to make sense of the twenty-first century.

Kalamazoo Valley’s “About Writing” series is organized by instructor Dr. Julie Stotz-Ghosh and offers students and the public the opportunity to talk with professional writers and listen to their work. For more information, contact Stotz-Ghosh at jstotzghosh@kvcc.edu.

All programs are free and open to the public.
Kalamazoo Valley Community College’s chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the international honor society for two-year colleges, inducted new members earlier this semester during a ceremony in the Dale B. Lake Auditorium on the Texas Township Campus.

More than 150 students, parents, faculty members and others from the community attended the induction which included remarks by new college president, L. Marshall Washington, Ph.D.

Keynote speaker and PTK alumna, Anne McLeod, led the installation of new chapter officers, including President Ariel Bradford, Vice President Brittany Gallagher, Communications Officer Virginia Wooley and Chapter Officer Myranda Dilley. The installation was followed by remarks and a ceremony to welcome the new members.

Phi Theta Kappa has recognized academic excellence at two-year colleges since 1918 and has inducted more than 1.2 million members at more than 1,200 colleges throughout its history. Kalamazoo Valley’s Alpha Rho Nu chapter is advised by faculty members Jason Bishop and Alison Nord as well as Pathway Advisor Kevin Schneider. “The goal of Alpha Rho Nu is to advocate scholarship, fellowship, leadership and service,” Bishop said.

Phi Theta Kappa, Bishop continued, provides opportunity for the development of leadership and service. “For an intellectual climate for exchange of ideas and ideals, for lively fellowship for scholars, and for stimulation of interest in continuing academic excellence.”

The college’s chapter accomplishes this by focusing on ways to benefit both the college and local communities. PTK members meet at least once each month and hold regular service events to benefit both the college and the community.

“The kind of organization that inspires students to be the best they can be, and the opportunities go beyond just the scholarships that are available to members,” Bishop said. “It is a fast-track to excellence.”

As part of one project, members will be working closely with the college’s Transfer Resource Services department to create awareness of the services offered to students interested in transferring to a four-year college or university after goal completion at Kalamazoo Valley.

“Some students transfer to other schools, and very few realize that we can help walk them through that process,” Nord said.

Other service projects planned for this year involve researching the role of social media and how it is reshaping the news. Membership is open to students who have completed at least 12 credit hours with a 3.5 or higher cumulative grade point average. New members receive a Gold Key pin, special recognition on their diploma, and access to millions of dollars in scholarships. For more information on meetings or for more information about the chapter, visit facebook.com/AlphaRhoNu or email Ariel Bradford at abradford7964@mail.kvcc.edu.

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