



Paul Steck speaks at ribbon cutting as Raritan Valley Community College is among first to open a Workforce Training Center

President of Exothermic Molding, addresses ribbon cutting and sites 50-year skills gap in the workforce as employers are losing highly-skilled workers to retirement.

BRANCHBURG, NJ - Raritan Valley Community College officially opened its Workforce Training Center on Tuesday, becoming one of the first in the region to offer career training under one roof.

The 47,000-square-foot building will house its automotive technology, advanced manufacturing technology, cosmetology, skincare, environmental control technology and commercial energy management students. The college, serving both Somerset and Hunterdon counties, built the facility at its main campus. Before this, the various programs were offered in classrooms spread across the township and Bridgewater campuses.

"One thing we don't do enough in America anymore is make things," State Sen. Christopher "Kip" Bateman (R-16th) said during a ceremony marking the opening of the center. "And this facility will help train individuals who will be able to go out there and make things, and that is important. The rest of the world has picked up where we used to be."

The manufacturing business is changing thanks to the introduction of computers and other technologies, like 3D printing.

Paul Steck, owner of Exothermic Molding, Inc. of Kenilworth and advisor to the college's advanced manufacturing technology board, said there is a 50-year skills gap in the workforce. Steck said employers are losing highly-skilled workers to retirement, and there are few younger workers to take their place. The board meets with prospective students to show them potential careers.

"We give students a feel for what our little business, our niche, is doing," Steck said. "If we can get them interested, it's a home run for us."

Robert P. Wise, chair of the college's board of trustees, said the facility shows the strong relationship the college is forming with businesses.

"The workforce training center is a win for businesses, students and our two counties," Wise said.

"Today is a turning point in the history of RVCC," said college President Michael J. McDonough. "The college, which has long been celebrated for its academic transfer programs, is now leading the way in providing a state-of-the-art facility for students to train for careers in some of the most sought-after occupations.

"The partnership ensures that our students will graduate with the high level of training and real-work experience that local employers are seeking."

The facility, designed by SSP Architectural Group of Bridgewater, includes trade programs, a working salon, classrooms, offices, a student lounge and the Small Business Development Center.

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