

News

Adult education program off to a rolling start

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STAFF WRITER

BRISTOL — State, city, and business leaders gathered at Rowley Spring and Stamping Corp. Friday morning to unveil the AEDAC workforce development program.

AEDAC (Adult Education Diploma and Certificate) is a GED/Skills in Manufacturing Certificate program open to adult learners at the Bristol Adult Education Center, which shares a building with Rowley Spring and Stamping Corp. at 210 Redstone Hill Road.

The program is made up of three components: GED Preparation, a targeted manufacturing competencies class, and hands-on training at Rowley. Classes are scheduled to begin in early September and will be held again in January.

The initiative, which costs about \$85,000, was funded entirely through private donors, including The Main Street Community Foundation, The Dollar General Literacy Foundation, The New England Spring and Metalstamping Association, The Farmington Bank Community Foundation, and Wal-Mart.

The conference was attended by over 30 people, including U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, State Rep. Whit Betts, R-Bristol, Mayor Ken Cockayne, Councilman Henri Martin, Jim Albert, president of the Central Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, Superintendent of Schools Ellen Solek, Lawrence Covino, supervisor of adult education, George Fournier, president of the New England Spring and Metalstamping Association, Susan D. Sadecki, president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation and John Dellalana, president of Rowley Spring and Stamping Corp.

“Manufacturing is in Bristol and Connecticut’s DNA,” said Blumenthal, a Connecticut Democrat. “It began as the arsenal of democracy, with a lot of manufacturers producing defense components to make our nation strong and safe. Now, we are seeing a resurgence of manufacturing but there are a lot of folks that need the skills training. People with the right skills will find jobs, and those that lack skills will be unemployed longer than ever. The difference between this recession and recovery and most is its fragility and an unprecedented number of long-term unemployed people. That’s why this partnership is important; it give folks the chance to better themselves, enter the workforce and help with the resurgence of manufacturing.”

“We’ve seen a resurgence in American-made products coming back from overseas,” said Albert. “People used to always say that those jobs weren’t coming back, but now I say those jobs are here to stay. The cost of doing business overseas is becoming more and more expensive and risky. Protections for intellectual properties don’t exist in many other countries and the technology and productivity in this country is second to none.”

“This is exactly what Connecticut needs,” said Betts. “It’s a win-win situation, with a lot of people looking for jobs and manufacturing growing. There are a lot of elderly people in the workforce that are going to need to be replaced as they retire, and having this partnership between Rowley and the BEAC is a great solution to that problem.”

“This is an outstanding program,” said Cockayne. “It is great for the manufacturing industry and the community as a whole. It will allow us to have the workforce we need to continue to grow businesses.”

Any adult interested in applying for the AEDAC program is urged to contact the BEAC at (860) 584-7865.

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