

Bristol high schools, Tunxis could come together on manufacturing training

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STAFF WRITER

BRISTOL – Tunxis Community College is in the very early stages of developing a five year program with Bristol Central and Bristol Eastern high schools to allow students to earn an associate's degree in manufacturing.

Larry Covino, Adult Education director and a member of the Bristol Technical Advisory Council, said the idea is in “very, very preliminary stages.”

He said it originated with James Lombella, who is president of Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield and interim president of Tunxis.



Mike Orazzi | Staff Tunxis Community College

“Asnuntuck has a very successful advanced manufacturing program, one piece of which is a fifth year program they run with East Granby High School,” Covino said. “So it has been mentioned in meetings with the Bristol Technical Advisory Committee that Tunxis is interested in bringing this setup to Bristol.”

“It’s a great idea, especially in this area where there’s such a need for manufacturing. I think it would be a great opportunity for our students, for the school system, for the manufacturers, for the community, everybody,” he said.

Covino noted that apprentices in manufacturing programs can make \$15 to \$20 an hour, but studies have shown the average age of employees in manufacturing jobs in this area is 55. Getting young people interested and trained in the field is crucial to attracting high end manufacturing to the Bristol, he said.

“I’m just a go between right now, getting the two parties to make contact. At some point, after the holidays, when Tunxis gets a better handle on everything then we’ll sit down with them and figure out all the specifics of it,” he added.

Bristol schools and Tunxis already have an ongoing relationship through the College Career Pathways program, which provides several pathways of high school classes that make it possible for students to explore future career options and earn free college credit at the same time. Students can earn college credits which can then be applied to certificate or degree programs at Tunxis or transferred to other colleges and universities.

The Bristol Technical Advisory Council is co-sponsored by the Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce, Main Street Community Foundation, New England Spring and Metalstamping Association and the Bristol Board of Education. It’s comprised of business leaders from several STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) related industries including manufacturing, construction, industrial engineering, communications, entertainment and the trades.