



PRESS RELEASE

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LCC and Lansing BWL Break Ground for Great Lakes Center for Utility Training to Prepare Workers for High-Demand Jobs

Lansing, MI -- Lansing Community College (LCC) and the Lansing Board of Water & Light (BWL) broke ground today at LCC's West Campus for the new Great Lakes Center for Utility Training which could become a multi-state leader in the delivery of utility-related training while giving LCC students a leg-up on jobs of the 21st Century.

Today's launch of phase one of the project, which calls for the installation of 22 electrical line construction training poles, ranging in size from 40 to 60-feet tall, should be finished by the end of September. That means LCC students enrolled in the electrical utility/lineworker certificate program can get hands-on experience on campus instead of traveling to a facility in Marshall.

The expectations are that each year 40-80 Lansing Community College students will take part in training at the location as will 100 workers from area utility companies.

"We are excited to offer this state-of-the art facility for our students to train for high-skill, high-demand, high-wage jobs of today that will address the transition to the jobs of tomorrow," said LCC President Brent Knight. "After completing the one year program, students typically earn between \$20 and \$23 an hour as apprentice lineworkers."

George Berghorn, chair of LCC's Environmental, Design and Building Technologies Department, added, "It is only through an outstanding collaborative partnership with the Lansing Board of Water and Light that this new facility was transformed from an idea to a reality, and the entire community will benefit."

“The Lansing Board of Water & Light has for many years made a priority of growing its 21st Century workforce,” said BWL General Manager J. Peter Lark. “This training center is a natural adjunct to our company’s efforts to recruit and train the next generation of BWL utility workers. I look forward to this extended partnership with Lansing Community College, and applaud President Brent Knight’s leadership in spearheading this great effort.”

Phase one of the new center will be located on two acres of a five-acre site on LCC’s West Campus.

Within the next few years, the center will also offer pre-apprenticeship (college student) and in-service training in underground utility construction (electric, gas, water and fiber optic cable), metering including Smart Grid integration, power plant and power generation operations, and instrumentation and control systems technology.

The facility is expected to help address a nationwide impending workforce shortage in the energy industry. According to the National Regulatory Research Institute, the shortage reflects an unprecedented number of retirements expected to occur in the next decade, coupled with increasing energy demand and changes in the skill sets needed to support shifts toward “greener” energy technologies. The U.S. Department of

Labor predicts that 500,000 energy industry workers will retire over the next five to ten years, a turnover rate of 50 percent. Without a significant number of new, high-skilled workers, the shortage could create havoc with the nation’s ability to maintain an adequate electricity supply to remain competitive in the global market.

About Lansing Community College

Lansing Community College is Michigan’s third largest community college with more than 30,000 students attending each year. LCC offers courses in general education for those interested in transferring to a four-year institution, career and workforce development, developmental education and personal enrichment. To meet the professional development and training needs of regional employees, the college offers customized programs for credit, non-credit and continuing education. The University Center at LCC offers students the opportunity to earn bachelor’s and master’s degrees from six partner universities on the downtown LCC campus. For more information, visit lcc.edu.