Opportunities Delivered at Applied Technology Education Center

As the College of the Canyons Canyon Country Campus prepares for its five-year anniversary this fall, the campus’ state-of-the-art Applied Technology Education Center (ATEC) is also celebrating its own one-year anniversary.

Designed to give students a new selection of hands-on learning and training opportunities, the eagerly anticipated ATEC officially opened on Thursday, Aug. 25, 2011 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, technology demonstration and tour of the new facility.

Representing the Canyon Country campus’ first permanent building, the ATEC facility is located on the south side of campus in Quad 700, adjacent to the Campus Safety department, on a hillside overlooking the campus’ two main parking areas. The facility houses the college’s water systems technology, plumbing, solar technology & renewable energy and automotive technology programs, and includes more than 10,000 square-feet of workshop and laboratory space.

Since its opening, students and community members have flocked to the Center in search of the various types of Career Technical Education (CTE) training opportunities the facility was designed to provide — which are also in high demand with local employers.

“The ATEC facility is literally used around the clock, six days a week,” said Kristin Houser, COC dean of career technical education. “We have water technology students attending classes at night, auto students working in the lab both day and night, plumbing courses at night, and solar technology classes in the late afternoons, with lab classes meeting on Saturday mornings.

COC officials expect the action at ATEC to continue its pace into the fall semester, and beyond, as the four programs housed there continue to expand and introduce new curriculum and training opportunities.

In fact, the college’s plumbing technology program is gearing up for a major expansion in the coming months, with curriculum approval for a new plumbing lab course expected to be granted in time for start of the spring 2013 semester. The program’s 16-unit certificate program is also expected to receive approval from the state chancellor’s office, which will allow the college to begin producing a qualified pool of job candidates for the local plumbing industry to hire from.

“Beginning this fall, plumbing students will also have the opportunity to explore the emerging solar side of the industry, with the debut of the college’s new course, Solar 052 — Solar Thermal Systems. The course introduces students to various forms of solar thermal technology, including solar hot

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water systems, thermal pool heating and solar radiant floor heating systems.

Included as part of the college’s 13-unit solar energy technician certificate program, Solar 052 can also be taken by plumbing students who are looking to enhance their employment opportunities by adding this new skill set to their training.

“New plumbing students and current plumbers alike may want to explore the Solar 052 course, as knowledge of solar thermal technology is becoming increasingly important within the industry,” Houser said.

For students and community members more concentrated on exploring a career in the solar technology industry, both the college’s solar lab courses — Solar 050: Photovoltaic Systems and Solar 050 — will prepare students to sit for the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) exams in entry level solar thermal and entry level photovoltaic.

This fall, the college will also offer a three-unit course, Solar 101: Introduction to Energy Technology, which may be taken concurrently with either solar lab course.

The college is also developing a second solar energy certificate program, which would focus on training students to work on the sales/marketing side of this fast-growing industry.

“Our industry partners have indicated that for every new solar installation/maintenance position filled, there are five solar-related office jobs that also need to be filled,” Houser said.

The College of the Canyons Technical Education (CTE) division will host an information session for students and community members interested in learning more about the career opportunities and educational pathways associated with the college’s solar technology and renewable energy program, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 8 at the ATEC, located on the college’s Canyon Country campus.

For more information about the lineup of Career Technical Education (CTE) courses at College of the Canyons or the Applied Technology Education Center (ATEC) visit www.canyons.edu/offices/CTE/.