

Butler Eagle

XTO contributes to training center

BC3 to establish new program

Article published April 19, 2013
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BUTLER TWP — A \$100,000 contribution from XTO Energy will help establish the Petroleum Technology Training Center at **Butler County Community College**, expanding BC3's programs to train workers in the oil and gas industry.

According to XTO, which announced the contribution Thursday, the program will prepare students for a range of positions in the industry, from roustabouts who are oil rig laborers to high-skill positions such as instrumentation mechanics.

XTO has similar partnerships, including one with Navarro College's Oil & Gas Production Technology program in Texas. Like Navarro College, the BC3 program will offer “stackable” credentials, giving student the opportunity to earn an industry-developed certificate while still allowing the transfer of appropriate experience and credentials into an accredited degree program.

“Butler County Community College is pleased to be identified by XTO for the development of a new Petroleum Technology Training Center. It reinforces our role as a leader in gas and energy training,” said BC3 President Nick Neupauer in an e-mail.

“We understand the important role community colleges play in workforce training. This grant will continue to help provide opportunities for the citizens of Butler County and all of Western Pennsylvania to work in the gas and energy industry.”

As part of the partnership, XTO Energy will provide guidance in training and expectations, which will be reflected in the curriculum. XTO employees also will be recruited to become program instructors.

Tim McIlwain, vice president of operations for XTO's Appalachia Division, said, “Through this program, more local residents will be trained for good-paying jobs that are developing within the growing natural gas industry in Butler County.”



Lorie Jackson of XTO on Thursday presents Tony Bilott, treasurer of the BC3 Educational Foundation, with a check to fund part of BC3's Petroleum Technology Training Center. The center will expand BC3's programs to train workers in the oil and gas industry.

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Beyond being earmarked for “petroleum industry related training,” the exact purpose the \$100,000 will be used for still is being determined, according to Steve Catt, executive director of BC3’s work force development group.

The partnership marks the next step in BC3’s nontraditional course offerings in the oil and gas industry.

In 2011, BC3 used a \$553,044 federal grant to expand a welding program geared toward providing workers for the extensive network of gas transmission lines that will be built in the region. BC3’s program uses facilities at the Butler County Vocational-Technical School at Butler High School.

The BC3 campus also has a gas well simulation facility, including a wellhead that burns natural gas, as well as storage tanks and other equipment found at a typical Marcellus Shale natural gas site. The facility is used to train first responders and gas company employees.

Last year, the college filled roustabout classes in February, April, June and August, with about 40 students completing the course and more than 75 percent of them retaining or finding new work in the industry.