

Grads of new Workforce Development program guaranteed job interview, BC3 administrator says

Field safety technician certificate for natural gas and oil industries debuts Sept. 9

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(Butler, PA) Graduates of a new two-week natural gas and oil safety training program offered by Butler County Community College and ESP Safety Consultants are guaranteed a job interview from a temporary agency that can place graduates in regional entry-level positions in the energy industry, according to a BC3 Workforce Development administrator.

The field safety technician certificate program – held in partnership with ESP, a Homer City company whose services include Occupational Safety and Health Administration compliance, safety training and safety auditing – is scheduled for Monday through Friday from Sept. 9-20 in the Public Safety Training Facility on BC3's main campus in Butler Township.

Most classes will be held from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Classes on Sept. 18 and 19 end at 5:50 p.m.

Students can earn national certifications in OSHA 10-hour general industry, OSHA powered industrial truck operations, PEC Safeland USA certification and in American Health Association first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillator, said Maria Chvala, BC3's coordinator of industrial safety training.

Upon completion of the field safety technician certificate program – whose topics also include the basics of geology in oil and natural gas, of drilling or completing a Marcellus or Utica well, of flowback operations, of production equipment and of pipeline construction and safety – students will receive a formal interview with Temp2Tech, Chvala said.

Temp2Tech, also located in Homer City, “will interview each student and hire that student,” Chvala said. “Then Temp2Tech will place students in an appropriate company that fits their skill level and reflects what that student might be looking for.”

Temp2Tech's hourly rate ranges from \$9 to \$22, and reflects the worker's position, experience level and the typical rate paid by the company at which the employee will be placed, according to Melissa Jones, Temp2Tech's vice president for business development.

The field safety technician certificate program “will help employers to hire employees who are now going to be familiar with what it takes to be successful in an entry-level career position to

work in the oil and gas field,” Chvala said. “This class is a combination of classroom and hands-on instruction and will make the students familiar with what’s happening in the oil and gas industry.”

The \$2,495 cost of the program includes tax and certifications. Some students may be eligible for tuition assistance through the Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board, which funds training for high-priority occupations, Chvala said.

Nearly 950 oil and natural gas well permits were issued in 25 Pennsylvania counties between January and June 2019, according to a July 11 report by the state Department of Environmental Resources’ Office of Oil and Gas Management. That includes 39 in Butler County and 17 in Armstrong County. Twenty-six of those wells have been drilled in Butler County and seven in Armstrong County.

Pennsylvania ranks second to only Texas in natural gas production and is 17th in crude oil production, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

“More and more pipelines are being put in,” said Tom Baughman, an industrial safety trainer at BC3. “The challenge is having people who can get into this kind of work. Companies are looking for people with whom they don’t have to spend a lot of time with safety training. A lot of the safety training takes two weeks. Companies pay workers an hourly rate for two weeks plus pay trainers, so it’s not very cost-effective for them. But the safety training still has to be done.”

Students will also learn about hydrogen sulfide awareness, hazardous gases, fire extinguisher use, fall protection, incident prevention, personal protective equipment and other safety-related topics.

To be eligible for the program, students must also successfully pass a drug screening and criminal background check, which is covered by the cost of tuition.

Visit bc3.edu/field-safety for a list of training topics, eligibility requirements and interview opportunities. For more information, call 724-287-8711, Ext. 8355 or email maria.chvala@bc3.edu.