Bridgestone Partners With College to Enhance Job Training

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Bridgestone Americas and Motlow College south of Nashville have created a mechatronics lab to ensure the workforce is being trained to meet the demands of the industry.

DNJ.com – Business and education have created a partnership that will ensure the workforce is being trained to meet the demands of the industry.

Motlow State Community College President Mary Lou Apple. Bridgestone Americas and Motlow College south of Nashville held an open house on Oct. 11 for the mechatronics lab the two have created. Mechatronics is a blend of mechanical, electrical and computerized technologies that together form a system used in manufacturing, healthcare and finance settings.

Classes are taught by Motlow instructors in the two labs at Bridgestone’s tire plant in LaVergene, Tenn.

Plant Manager Keith Hamilton said when he told his company’s leadership about the desire to create such a program, they were immediately receptive.

“There are 600,000 technical jobs that have gone unfilled because of an untrained workforce. This doesn’t just affect Bridgestone; if we were doing this just for us, we wouldn’t be addressing the root cause of the problem,” Hamilton said. “It’s too big for Bridgestone to solve.”

Motlow president Mary Lou Apple said oftentimes when colleges create programs, the needs of the workforce aren’t at the forefront.

“This program was developed by industry for industry. That’s going to be a trend that we see going forward,” Apple said.

The program, already implemented at Warren County High School, and available to students at Oakland High next year, begins as a certificate program in high school. Students can build on the knowledge at a technical center or at Motlow before finishing up a bachelor’s program at Middle Tennessee State University.

MTSU President Sidney McPhee said by the end of the month, university officials will have completed writing the requirements for the degree program. The document will be submitted to the Tennessee Board of Regents shortly thereafter for approval.

“That usually takes anywhere from six months to a year, but with this being in such high demand, I doubt it’ll take that long. Then we go to (Tennessee Higher Education Commission) for approval,” McPhee said.

He expects that by the time MTSU’s program is put in place, students in the associate’s degree program at Motlow will be able to transfer and obtain a bachelor’s degree in two years.

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