

TECH talk



MAY 2009



RMCTC Program Accreditation



Standing from left to right: Andy Rosario, Pablo Gallo, Christopher W. Revilla and Hector M. Ruiz. Seated from left to right: Yessica T. Fuentes, Cristina Arroyo.

Good economy or poor economy, the best paying jobs go to those who have the skills to fill them.

working to earn industry accreditation for several programs. In addition, they are seeking certification opportunities for themselves and their students.

What's more, a job applicant with certification in a skill or trade or someone who has graduated from an accredited program is more likely to get a position than an applicant without that competency or proof of the quality of his or her education.

"We're raising expectations for our programs," said Gerald Witmer, RMCTC administrative director. "This will give more opportunities to our students. If its industry association accredits a program, it shows potential employers that a student was exposed to a quality program that has met a high level of industry accountability. This will help to make our students more employable."

With that in mind, teachers and administrators at Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center are

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BIG PLANS FOR A BIG HOUSE

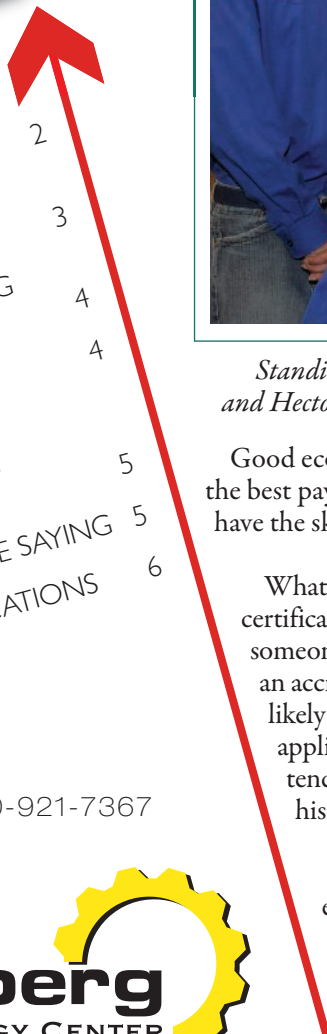
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FROM THE director



I am so proud of the students, staff, and community of the Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center! At the “heart” of school improvement is quality curriculum and outstanding instructional practices, and I’m pleased to share that both of these areas have improved – and continue to improve – significantly.

As highlighted in our cover story, RMCTC’s teachers are working hard to seek industry accreditations for their programs while pursuing certification opportunities for themselves and their students.

Possessing an industry-based certification is often very important to employers who may be considering many potential candidates for just one job vacancy. For our graduates, earning such a certification may make the difference between being hired or passed over for someone with stronger credentials.

RMCTC’s students are working harder and valuing programs of study that demand greater focus on math and literacy skills, the same skills businesses require of their workforce. In addition, more students are seriously considering and pursuing post-secondary educational opportunities to build upon the technical skills they learn at RMCTC.

Our community also is stepping up and supporting our teachers and program development efforts. Organizations such as Junior Achievement, the Home Builders Association of Berks County, and the Society for Human Resource Management have partnered with RMCTC to provide students with workplace experiences through participation in our on-campus industry roundtables and off-campus career days.

To everyone: Thanks! We still have plenty of work to do and challenging goals to accomplish as we strive to “make a difference” in our community!

Gerald P. Witmer Jr.

*Gerald P. Witmer Jr.
Administrative Director*

program accreditation continued

➤ *continued from page 1*

RMCTC programs already accredited or currently working toward accreditation in this or next year by their respective industries are:

Advertising Design & Commercial Art | Auto Body Repair
Automotive Technology | Baking & Pastry Arts | Bricklaying
Building & Property Maintenance | Cabinetmaking | Carpentry
Computerized Drafting Technology | Cosmetology | Culinary
Arts | Diesel Truck Technology | Electrical Technology
Health – Nursing Careers | Machine Shop Technology
Motorcycle, Marine & Small Engine Technology | Painting &
Decorating | Plumbing & Heating | Printing & Graphic
Communications | Welding & Metal Fabrication



“Program standards and requirements for accreditation are very stringent,” Witmer said. “Only outstanding educational programs are granted accreditation. Representatives of accrediting institutions perform on-site evaluations, but only after an internal program compliance review has been completed with the assistance of local industry experts serving in an advisory capacity.

Gaining accreditation means a school has “demonstrated that it meets requirements in areas of curriculum, instruction, safety, facilities, and equipment,” Witmer said. “What’s more, our students then will be eligible to sit for industry certification, a huge plus for their job search.”

Program accreditation is just the beginning, Witmer added: the ultimate goal is to seek school-wide accreditation for RMCTC through a recognized accrediting institution still to be determined.

“It boils down to this,” he said. “Accreditation, whether at the program level or school-wide, assures our students and their parents that our programs are of high quality.”





student

IN ACTION

Katherine Hernandez

Imagine you're 17 again. Imagine you're a student in Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center's Computerized Drafting Technology program.

And then imagine that a Reading businessman asks you to draft the specifications of his dream retirement home – a large retirement home – 9,000 square feet. What's more, the house will be constructed on a cliff overlooking a lake in Oklahoma.

Do you freak out? Are you sweating bullets? Are you intimidated by the challenge of designing a luxury home?

If you're **Katherine Hernandez**, this assignment is no problem. In fact, it is right up your alley. This is what you live for.

"I love big houses," Katherine said. "The space. The possibilities. The house was a fun project."

A fun project.

"That's Katherine for you," said **Ralph Stock**, instructor for the Computerized Drafting Technology program. "There's little that will faze her."

Katherine received the house design assignment because "she finished the [computerized drafting technology] curriculum in her second year, and we're always looking for something for her to do," Stock said.

Katherine received extra credit for the house design, a project she completed in three months using Revit® Architecture software.

She came to the program because "I like math," she said. "I like buildings and I like drawing, although I can't draw freehand. But I love drawing with the computer."



Katherine Hernandez designed a Reading resident's dream retirement home – at 17!

Gerald Witmer, RMCTC administrative director, said Katherine is one of the top 15 students in her high school class.

"With more than 700 students in her class, that's quite an accomplishment," he said.

Katherine has earned a 3.95 grade point average (out of a possible 4.0) even while taking Advanced Placement history and calculus, as well as accelerated English. She sat for the College Level Education Program test in Spanish (she grew up in the Dominican Republic and speaks the language fluently) and has earned 12 college credits as a result.

Her goal is to graduate from college with a degree in architectural engineering. She then plans to design homes, the larger the better.

"I like seeing what I can do with a large space," she said.



work-based LEARNING

Charged Up for Work

Scott Hinnershitz has the happy, open-faced look of a young man who has found his place in the world.

At 17.

Scott, a Muhlenberg High School senior and student in RMCTC's Electrical Technology program, also participates in the career and technology center's Work-based Learning program. As such, he's been working at East Penn Manufacturing-Deka Battery in Lyons Station since June 2008 as an electrical maintenance technician trainee in Deka's injection molding plant.

He worked full time at the 5,400-employee plant last summer and now works from about 11:30 a.m.–3 p.m. each day at Deka, with the morning spent in classes at the high school, where he maintains a 3.2 grade point average.

So what's different with learning about electrical technology on the job compared to the shop at RMCTC, aside from the fact that he's being paid as he learns?

Plenty.

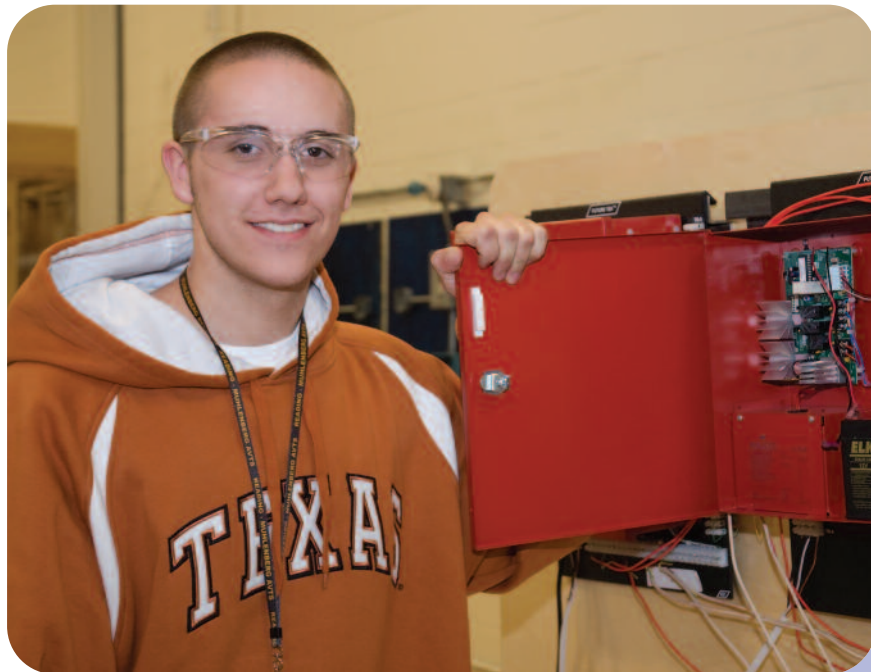
"In class, there's room for error," Scott said. "At Deka, it needs to be pretty much perfect. This is real. It needs to be done right."

"I can't tell you how many times I've had to bend a piece of conduit over and over and over again to get it right."

He relishes just about every bit of the working experience.

"Working last summer full time was an eye opener," Scott said. "Clocking in and out, and all. But I loved it! There's so much more I'm learning and doing at work than we do in class."

"For example, at RMCTC we wire up to 120 volts. At Deka, I've had experience with 240 volts, even 480 volts."



Scott Hinnershitz enjoys applying what he's learned at RMCTC to his work-based learning experience.

"But the best part of all is the chance to troubleshoot breakdowns. I love learning how to figure it out."

Scott hopes to hire on as an electrical maintenance trainee with Deka after high school graduation. According to Cheryl Spangler, employment manager, historically Deka has offered employment to students like Scott to fill available positions.

"In the past, we've hired more than half of the students in the Work-based Learning program at East Penn each year," Spangler said, adding that RMCTC is one of several career and technology schools with which Deka partners. "We are always searching for quality, long-term employees. Maintenance techs such as Scott are in great demand, so we're especially interested in bringing them on early."

"Many former career center students go on to become supervisors, engineers, or go into management with us," Spangler continued. "We've been doing this for 25 years and have had much success with it. If things work out for Scott, his work-based learning program could very well be the foundation for a long-term career here."



NEWS

Retirement Announcements

Carol Diehl

Cosmetology teacher
25 years

Barbara Rider

Administrative assistant
21 years

Nancy Slovik

Fiscal clerk
13 years

Carol, Barbara, and Nancy recently announced their retirements. Their service to the students and staff of RMCTC has been invaluable, and the entire RMCTC family wishes them well as they pursue their retirement plans!

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Mechanic to Mogul

Bill Delgado is a 1978 graduate of Reading High School and RMCTC's predecessor, the Reading-Muhlenberg Area Vocational-Technical School, studying in the former Motorcycle, Outboard, and Tractor Repair (MOTR) program. He now owns Keystone Software Solutions, a 400-client-strong software reseller in West Reading.

Delgado believes he would not be the success he is today if it had not been for the education he received at the school he refers to fondly as Vo-tech.

"I've been able to relate much of what I learned in mechanic training at Vo-tech to the software industry," Delgado said. "Both involve problem solving. We first identify the problem and then we work to solve it. What's more, Vo-tech did not just teach us the 'how,' it taught us the 'why,' the theory behind how things work. That's proven invaluable to me in running my own business."

Keystone is a value-added reseller (VAR) of accounting and business software, mostly Sage MAS 90 and Sage MAS 200. The company's 10 employees (including Delgado) deliver business management solutions utilizing the software as a tool, helping clients operate their companies more efficiently and effectively.

Delgado graduated from Reading HS and immediately secured a position as a motorcycle mechanic; working for several years until marriage and a first baby prompted him to look for a better-paying position. He secured a job at General Battery and worked there for 10 years until the business closed.

He then participated in a federal re-training program where he studied com-



puter programming. Six months into the year long program, Delgado landed a job as a programmer with a local software development company. After a 10-year stint, Delgado left in 1998 to found Keystone with business partner Sam Wandzilak.

His life experience has made him a huge supporter of vocational training education. Keystone is a member of RMCTC's Occupational Advisory Committee, and Delgado himself is on the school's Executive Committee. In addition, Keystone was instrumental in securing a complimentary copy of Sage MAS 90 business and accounting software for RMCTC's Information Technology – Applications program. The firm then donated software services and support and arranged for instructor **Michelle Sabatucci** to receive training on how to teach the software to her students.

Schools such as RMCTC are wonderful for high school students, Delgado said, because "they give you the opportunity to take something you're interested in and focus on it. You're at the school studying the precise subject you're interested in, and when it's your choice, you are motivated to do well."

WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING

"MY DAUGHTER MADE THE DEAN'S LIST AT THE ART INSTITUTE OF YORK. SHE SAID THAT WHAT SHE LEARNED AT RMCTC PUT HER AHEAD OF MOST OF HER CLASSMATES AND THAT SENDING HER TO RMCTC WAS THE BEST THING WE COULD HAVE DONE FOR HER. HER PROFESSORS HAVE TOLD HER SHE HAS A REALLY GREAT GRASP OF HER SUBJECTS, AND SHE SAID IT'S BECAUSE OF HER TEACHERS AT RMCTC. SHE'S LOVING SCHOOL AND HAS HAD PERFECT ATTENDANCE!"

-SUE LONSDORF
PARENT OF LEANNE LONSDORF
'08, ADVERTISING DESIGN & COMMERCIAL ART

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Attention Parents of 8th-graders:

RMCTC may be the right choice for your child as he or she begins to consider career pathways. Students may complete applications during the 9th grade for enrollment in 10th grade.

Visit our Web site (www.rmctc.org) or contact student services at 610-921-7310 for more information.

Also, please plan on attending our annual open house, scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 2009.

RMCTC...
creating a path to your career!



board members

William F. Cinfici
Richard E. Hoffmaster
Chris W. Okonski
Donald B. Raifsnider, Jr.
Lee R. Reiniger
John P. Santoro, Jr.
Keith R. Stamm
Jaime Wertz, Esq.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center, in partnership with our diverse community, sponsoring districts, and business and industry, is committed to providing quality career and technical education, resulting in opportunities for students to gain employment, pursue post-secondary education, and develop an appreciation for lifelong learning.

TEACHER CERTIFICATIONS

Kevin Brumbach, Cabinetmaking teacher, recently received Corian Installer certification through Dupont, Inc. This certification will allow students enrolled in the Cabinetmaking program to become certified under his instruction.

Tracy Stettler, Baking & Pastry Arts teacher, and **Justin Potteiger**, Culinary Arts teacher, received ServSafe Trainer certification. Under this sanitation certification program, they will teach the ServSafe program to both Baking and Culinary Arts students.

Sam Morraco, Automotive Technology, and **Charles Norman**, Diesel Truck Technology, recently earned Instructor Certification through the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF). This certification will allow both instructors to pursue program accreditation through NATEF and thereby provide students with the opportunity to become industry certified.



faculty NEWS

TEACHER ACCREDITATIONS

Jeff Manley, Bricklaying; **Dave Keehn**, Building & Property Maintenance; **Steve Weber**, Carpentry; **Steve McDevitt**, Electrical Technology; and **Tom Dietrich**, Plumbing & Heating, recently received program accreditation through the Pennsylvania Builders Association (PBA). This accreditation will allow a student enrolled in one of these programs the opportunity to receive certification through the PBA upon program completion.

Reading Muhlenberg

CAREER & TECHNOLOGY CENTER

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