



For Immediate Release

September 26, 2017

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CareerEdge Announces First Express Class Graduation

Workforce development non-profit CareerEdge Funders Collaborative announces the graduation of its first “express program” with 10 students completing Suncoast Technical College’s Automotive Lube Technician class this week.

The program was designed in partnership with Gettel Automotive to recruit entry-level automotive technician trainees to the industry.

“It’s really a win-win for the community to have CareerEdge help facilitate recruiting and training programs for critical shortage occupations like automotive technicians,” explains Gettel Fixed Operations Director Fred Bartholomew.

Given the high demand for skilled workers in our region, CareerEdge Funders Collaborative is partnering with several educational institutions to provide cutting edge short-term “express” programs in order to quickly move individuals into apprenticeship-based occupations in the trades. CareerEdge is also partnering with Manatee Technical College on short-term programs for Plumbing and Electrician certifications, and with the training company Learning Alliance for a short-term Broadband Technician program.

“STC appreciates the opportunity to partner with CareerEdge to help employers with their talent needs, as well as to provide individuals with skills and credentials which allow them to earn livable wages,” explains Suncoast Technical College Director Ron Dipillo.

Gettel Automotive hired all of the students at \$12 per hour for full or part-time trainee positions while they attended the free 10-week training program at the college two nights per week. Now that the participants have completed the class, they will be paid \$13 per hour full time with benefits, with the potential for additional certifications and career growth in the automotive apprenticeship program. Average wages for mechanics are between \$40,000 and \$50,000, with many earning six figures.

“CareerEdge continues to explore creative ways to help connect people to high demand career-laddering jobs while assisting employers with their workforce needs,” says Executive Director Mireya Eavey.

The automotive technician express program is funded by CareerEdge and a donor through the Gulf Coast Community Foundation. Automotive industry employers interested in participating in the next cohort should contact CareerEdge Senior Program Director Deborah Chapman at 941.328.6985.

About CareerEdge Funders Collaborative

CareerEdge is an innovative partnership of business, government, and philanthropic organizations that leverages public and private dollars to provide opportunities for better jobs and wages in Manatee and Sarasota counties. The first regional collaborative of workforce investors in the southeastern United States to be designated as a site of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, CareerEdge was created with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, City of Bradenton Central Community Redevelopment Agency, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Bank of America, Bradenton 14th Street Community Redevelopment Agency, Bradenton Downtown Development Authority, and Manatee Community Action Agency. It is also supported by contributions from the Charles and Margery Barancik Foundation, Microsoft, Sarasota County Government, Jane's Trust, JP Morgan Chase, Scheidel Foundation, Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg and United Way Suncoast. For more information about CareerEdge and its partners, please visit www.careeredgefunders.org or call 941.328.6985.

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The 10 graduates from CareerEdge's Automotive Express Program at Suncoast Technical College's car shop on graduation day.



Students received certificates of completion from Gettel Automotive's Fred Bartholomew for graduating from the Auto Technician program at Suncoast Technical College.