



PRESS RELEASE

January 28, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Yvonne Hester, Public Information Officer at (760) 955-1681

CALIFORNIA RECOVERY TASK FORCE AWARDS \$837,500 TO VICTOR VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR MECHANICS TRAINING PROGRAM

Victor Valley College program will train technicians for hybrid vehicles, diesel trucks and aircraft in partnership with the Southern California Logistics Airport School of Aviation Technology.

VICTORVILLE, CA - A workforce development plan designed by Victor Valley Community College, in partnership with the Southern California Logistics Airport School of Aviation Technology, to train hybrid vehicle, diesel and aircraft technicians was recognized by the Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's California Recovery Task Force this week when it awarded \$837,500 in federal economic stimulus funds to help the plan succeed. The award came as a result of a grant proposal written by the Victor Valley College Foundation in December based on this plan and with input from VVCC faculty, administration and SCLA School of Aviation Technology officials.

"We are focused on helping people get jobs by ensuring they have skills that today's employers recognize and tomorrow's employers will need," said Angela Valles, President of the Victor Valley College Board of Trustees. "This grant brings much needed funding for training programs to support industries that are important to the local economy."

As more than 60% of the goods from all of Southern California move through the Victor Valley and 60% of the local population still commutes to work, reliable transportation sources are vital to the High Desert economy. The demand for certified mechanics to keep vehicles, and the goods and people they carry, moving continues to outpace other industries nationwide. Training programs, like these, are important for preparing a workforce that can respond to new technologies and replace aging workers as they retire.

The program as funded supports training for 50 automotive technicians with skills necessary for repairing new hybrid vehicle technology, 25 diesel truck mechanics and 75 licensed Airframe and Power plant technicians. Working with employers, Victor Valley Community College will provide courses for auto and diesel mechanics and the SCLA School of Aviation will open additional spots in its aviation technology program. Students that are already enrolled will also benefit from support services available through the grant.

"We are ready to admit a new group of aviation students, but needed to find the resources to fund their training," said Terry Caldwell, Chairman, Southern California Logistics Airport Authority and Councilman, City of Victorville. "We are appreciative that Victor Valley College reached out to us and invited our participation in this program. Our employers at the airport need more airframe and propulsion mechanics and now with the College's help, we can provide them."

The School of Aviation Technology was developed by the Victor Valley Aviation Education Consortium, a non-profit organization, including members from the county of San Bernardino, the Southern California Logistics Airport Authority, and private aviation tenants currently conducting business at SCLA. There are approximately 60 students currently enrolled in the program. To date, funding for the program has come from SCLA, and San Bernardino County and its Workforce Investment Board. Victor Valley Community College assisted the consortium early in the program's development and continues to be concerned with its success. The new funding ensures the school will continue its effort to supply local workers for employers who currently rely on importing labor to meet their demand.

“The SCLA School of Aviation Technology is the type of program we need because of the direct connection this training makes between local employers and local residents. Its success means high-paying local careers,” said Brad Mitzelfelt, 1st District Supervisor, County of San Bernardino. “By coordinating this program to train automotive, diesel and aircraft mechanics, Victor Valley Community College has proven to be a great partner in leveraging this great asset to attract even more jobs to our area.”

Victor Valley Community College is one of thirteen agencies from throughout California that will receive a combined total of more than \$10.7 million in funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It was the only agency in San Bernardino County to be selected for participation in the funding offered through the “Industries with Statewide Need” program.

“Pursuing these alternative funding sources is exactly what the board has asked the college administration to do,” Valles said. “We have a responsibility to the residents of our district and can't rely on the state budget to provide the resources required to deliver services they need. We genuinely appreciate the efforts our faculty, administration, foundation, and community partners have put forth to secure this important training opportunity.”