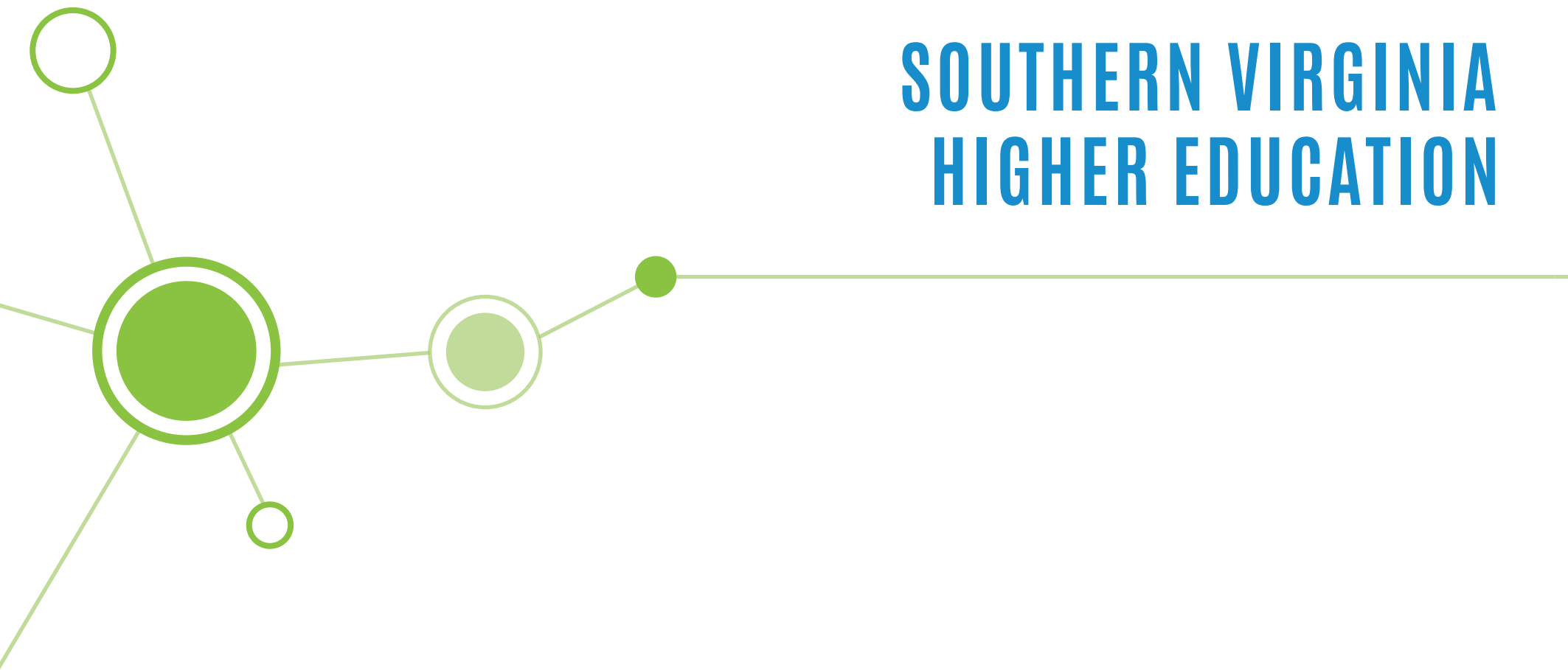


# SOUTHERN VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

# SOUTHERN VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION



## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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## Message from the Executive Director

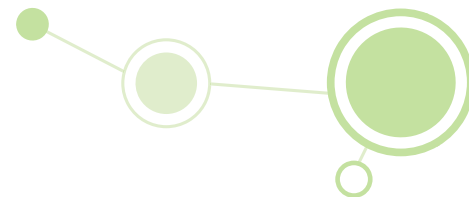


The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) was launched in 1986 through a unique collaboration with three degree-granting partners to bring affordable, accessible educational opportunities to our area. The synergy that launched us more than 35 years ago sustains us today as we remain focused on our mission of advancing Southern Virginia through education, innovation and collaboration.

The FY 2021 Annual Report is a testament to the power of collaboration — the process of people and organizations working together to complete tasks and achieve goals. With thirty-five years of experience, SVHEC collaborations have expanded as we leverage the educational and intellectual resources of an ever-growing list of partners and affiliates. Today, the SVHEC provides citizens with more life-changing educational opportunities than ever before.

Our successful collaborations demonstrate that innovative partnerships grow an educated workforce, support industry and boost entrepreneurs. We are thrilled to share these successes with you!





First, you will read about the Career Tech Academy (CTA), a collaboration with three public school systems and two community colleges that gives young people a reason to stay in the region by providing hands-on, in-demand technical training and work-based learning (WBL) experiences. Thanks to support from Danville Community College (DCC), the CTA has expanded this year to include a new automation and robotics program, and — in spite of a pandemic — six area businesses agreed to host WBL students as they practiced their skills, earned wages and experienced being an employee in a “real-time” work environment.

Next, you will meet Vara Chandler, who leveraged her IT Academy training and a collaboration with Microsoft to turn a manufacturing layoff into a full-time job as a data-center technician in only five months. You will hear how a new alliance with DCC is bringing much-needed emergency medical technician (EMT) training to Halifax and the surrounding counties. You’ll also learn how DCC and SVHEC are partnering to provide a unique, customized training solution for Hitachi Energy.

You will read about how five partners — Sentara Healthcare, Microsoft, Chastain Home for Gentlewomen, Southern Virginia Higher Education Foundation and Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission — collaborated to fund a “refresh” for the Center of Nursing Excellence (CNE), ensuring that tomorrow’s healthcare workforce receives training on the most advanced simulation and audiovisual equipment.

You will hear about the launch of the new ProductWorks brand, focused on connecting technology, creativity and industry insight. The ProductWorks staff leverages product design and development capabilities to advance the economic potential of regional industry and entrepreneurs like TMI Autotech and Virginia International Raceway.

You will learn about how the SVHEC is increasing access to high-demand degrees by teaming up with Old Dominion University (ODU) to spotlight tech-focused programs and help students create a seamless path from high school and community college to a bachelor’s degree. SVHEC’s expanded role with Virginia’s premier engineering collaborative, Cardinal Education, helps working engineers get the graduate-level education they need to grow in their jobs while supporting critical industries.

The collaborations described in this report are even more remarkable because they occurred in the thick of a pandemic. Through our connections with chambers of commerce, the Longwood Small Business Development Center, GO TEC, the SoVA Innovation Hub and many other groups and organizations, we continue to support students, employers and entrepreneurs to help them achieve their goals. Never before have we seen as much excitement and activity within Southern Virginia’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. We’re proud to serve as a partner and a resource.

A celebration of SVHEC collaborations, connections and partnerships, the FY 2021 Annual Report is a tribute to our determination to ensure that nothing — not even a pandemic — keeps us from our commitment to provide educational and economic development opportunities that advance Southern Virginia. You will be inspired.

**Dr. Betty H. Adams**  
SVHEC Executive Director

## About the SVHEC

For more than 30 years, the SVHEC has helped people in Southern Virginia transform their lives by harnessing the power of education on their own terms. We began operations in 1986 out of a modest 500 square-foot mobile unit on the grounds of the local high school. Since that time, we've become a state agency and now operate out of two repurposed tobacco warehouses donated by local benefactors and renovated with community bonds, private donations, historic tax credits and various state and federal grants. In 2019, to accommodate the growth of our job training programs, we expanded into the nearby commercial space of a renovated textile factory.

Today, the SVHEC is an epicenter of education and job training in Southern Virginia. Our campus features 115,000 square feet of technically sophisticated space, including high-tech classrooms and labs featuring simulation technology focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Healthcare (STEM-H).

Through a unique partnership with community colleges and state universities, we are able to provide convenient, affordable access to college degree programs and job training opportunities right here in South Boston. We also provide short-term, hands-on credential-based training in automation and industrial maintenance, information technology, welding, and HVAC to help students go from “zero to career” in less than a year. We are also home to the Commonwealth’s only single-source location for product design and development services.

The SVHEC also seeks to help both new and existing businesses and industries remain productive and profitable. Therefore, we offer employers the opportunity to partner on customized, innovative training solutions that support their evolving workforce needs.

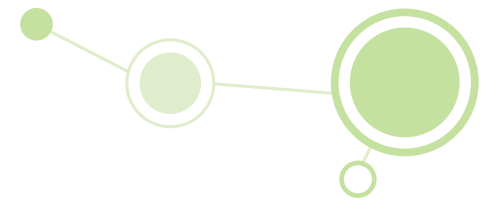
To make these opportunities as accessible as possible, financial aid and financial assistance for programs and training opportunities are available. We also offer day and evening classes for scheduling flexibility.

Your opportunity lives here — today and in the future. Through the SVHEC, you can advance your career and education, regardless of your age or stage of life.

### Your Opportunity Lives Here.



# Governance

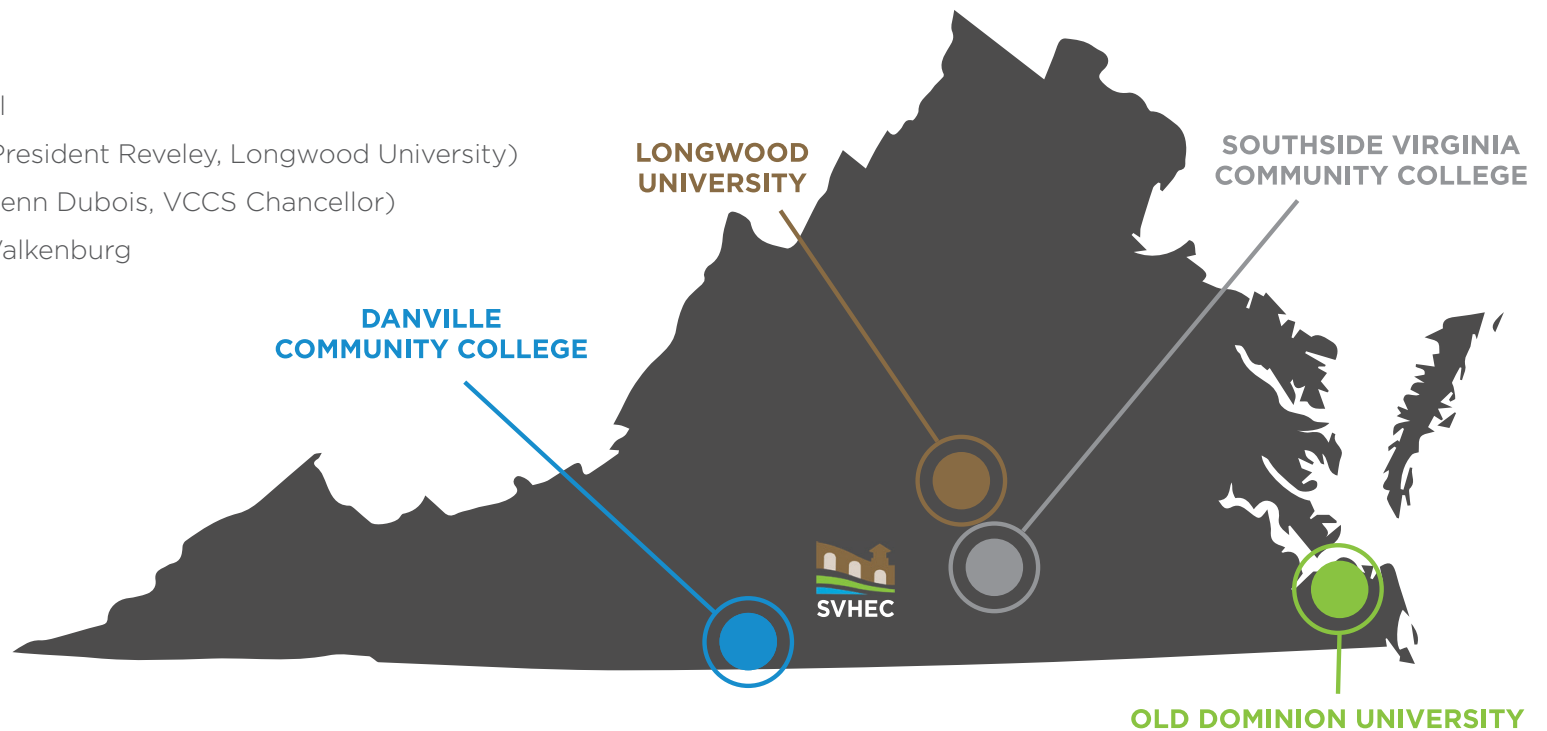


## FY 2021 BOARD OF TRUSTEES (JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021)

Mr. Peter Blake  
Ms. Mattie Cowan  
The Honorable Nancy Guy  
Dr. Quentin R. Johnson  
Mr. Doug Lee  
Mr. John C. Lee  
The Honorable Louise Lucas  
Dr. Jacqueline Gill Powell  
Mr. Paul Nichols  
The Honorable Hubert Pannell  
Dr. Ken Perkins (Designee of President Reveley, Longwood University)  
Mr. Tom Raab (Designee of Glenn Dubois, VCCS Chancellor)  
The Honorable Schuyler VanValkenburg  
The Honorable Dennis Witt  
Dr. Charlette Woolridge

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Dr. Betty H. Adams, Executive Director  
Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens, Chief Workforce Development Officer  
Mrs. Brenda Terry, Chief Finance and Operations Officer







# K-12 OPPORTUNITIES



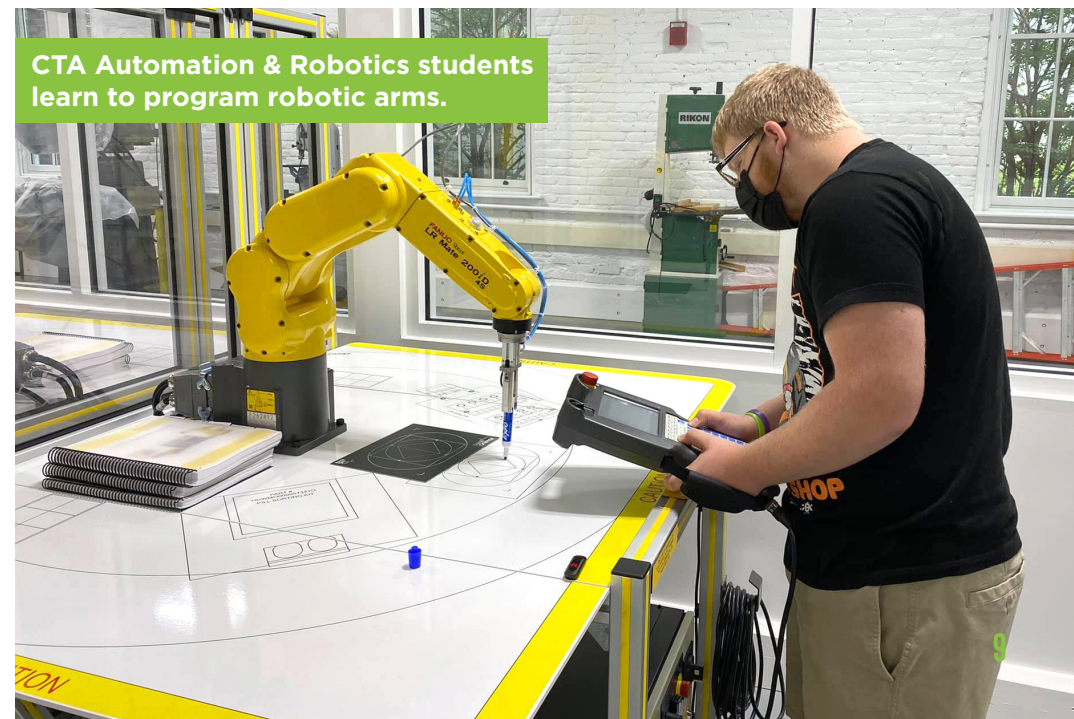
# Expanded Partnership Brings New Automation & Robotics Program

Danville Community College's (DCC) expanded partnership with the Career Tech Academy (CTA) opened the door to a new, high-tech program offering. In FY 2021, Automation & Robotics was added as a Level 1 offering for CTA students. DCC assisted with equipment selection and setup and is providing students with college credit.

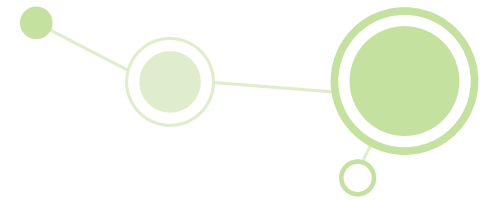
Automation & Robotics teaches the principles of robotics technology and the integration of robotics into automated systems. The program's curriculum is vendor-neutral, meaning that students learn how to apply the principles taught no matter what equipment they encounter in the workforce. Students may earn 19 college credits from DCC and a career studies certificate; after high school graduation, they may apply their earned credits towards an Associate degree from DCC.

Automation & Robotics is open to juniors and seniors from Bluestone, Halifax County and Randolph-Henry High Schools. Students attend classes at the SVHEC five days a week and learn a range of in-demand skills, including programming and coding, troubleshooting automated and robotics systems, and installation and configuration of automated systems.

Students are trained with a keen eye on maintaining automated systems and keeping them operating at peak efficiencies, a skillset that is in high demand in the workforce. Entry-level careers include robotics technician, robotics operator, manufacturing technician, and manufacturing troubleshooter, with an average starting salary range of \$18-\$22 per hour.



# Cooperation Between IALR and SVHEC Expands K-12 Career Exploration



By Allison Moore, IALR. Reprinted with permission

**The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research's (IALR) advanced learning team worked with school divisions and employers to conduct the SOVA Career ChoICE Youth Expo, delayed from last fall, in a virtual format this spring.**

"With the support of the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center, we've been excited to expand Career ChoICE to the east, adding seven additional school divisions and bringing the total to 14, nearly the entire GO Virginia Region 3 footprint," said Jessie Vernon, IALR program coordinator.

"To meet students' career exploration needs, we knew we needed to adapt our usual model and content."

This year's virtual format included various activities over a three-month period:

**January:** 7,500 redesigned Career ChoICE booklets were distributed to students determined by each school division. In addition to general career pathway information, benefits, and cost of living, the booklet contains 51 occupational snapshots with salary demand and education information specific to our region.

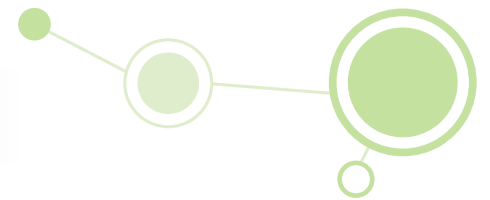
**February:** A series of Career ChoICE career cluster videos ([bit.ly/careerchoicevideos](https://bit.ly/careerchoicevideos)) highlighted regional businesses and organizations representing Virginia's 17 career clusters.

**March:** Sixteen virtual Career ChoICE career cluster panels featured regional employers and employees, highlighting the diversity of career pathways available in our region. 69 area professionals served as panelists sharing their knowledge and experience with students. The panels had over 3,200 live views with students participating both individually or as part of a class. Panel recordings were added to the Career ChoICE website ([www.sovacareerchoice.org](http://www.sovacareerchoice.org)) for later viewing.

## **ITA Completer Spotlighted in Career ChoICE Booklet**

IT Academy graduate Abdullah Bell was spotlighted as a young professional in the 2021 Career ChoICE booklet. Today, Abdullah is a support engineer for Microsoft. He credits his training in the IT Academy for giving him the skills and certifications needed to launch a successful career.

## Student Profile



### Abdullah Bell

**Occupation:** Support Engineer, Microsoft

**Salary Range:** \$70,000 - \$90,000

**Hometown:** Halifax, Va.

**Post-secondary Education:** Digital Arts & Design Certification, Danville Community College; Associate degrees in Business Management & Information Technology, Southside Virginia Community College; CompTIA A+, CompTIA Server+, and CompTIA Security+, IT Academy at Southern Virginia Higher Education Center; Certified Database Technician, In Progress: Associate degree in Network Engineering & Cyber

Security; Cloud+, MTA Database Fundamentals, MTA Azure Fundamentals, MTA Software Development Fundamentals.

**First job:** Apprentice engineer at the Global Center for Automotive Performance Simulation

**Best Career Advice:** You can learn something from every interaction. Be curious and seek out opportunities to learn.  
**Favorite Part About your Job:** What I enjoy most about my job is that every day involves learning and solving unique challenges that can often transfer to other parts of the IT industry. I get to look back on my week and see my progress.



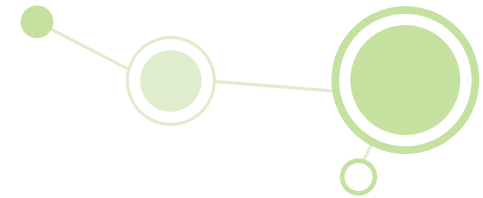
### CTA statistics 2018-2021:

- ④ Expansion of Year 1 programs from two to FOUR OPTIONS
- ①② Addition of LEVEL 2, Work-Based Learning
- 100 Touched the lives of 100 STUDENTS from 3 COUNTIES
- 202 202 industry credentials earned
- 56 56 career studies certificates awarded from SVCC (many of those students were in 11th grade)
- 7 SEVEN students offered full-time positions making over \$15/HR after completing CTA training

Josh Garber of Oval Machining works with CTA WBL student Ethan Arnold.



## Career Tech Academy Collaborates with Employers to Offer Work-Based Learning



In 2018, SVHEC launched the Career Tech Academy (CTA), a hands-on training program for high school juniors and seniors from Charlotte, Halifax and Mecklenburg counties. In FY 2020, CTA@SVHEC was expanded to add a second level encompassing Work-Based Learning (WBL). The level-two program is open to seniors who have completed level one and provides students with an opportunity to apply their skills with a paid work experience. Three days a week, students travel to job sites where they function as company employees while supervised by a mentor.

In FY 2021, six area businesses — AJ Transport, Charles Anderson Lawn Care, Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative, Mike's TV and Radio Service, Oval Machining and the town of South Boston — agreed to host WBL students. Lisa Mettler, WBL instructor and career coach, worked tirelessly to form strong relationships with area businesses and has been instrumental to the success of the program.

"Lisa did an outstanding job placing and guiding each WBL student during the pandemic," said Stephanie Robinson, CTA administrator. "With her hard work and dedication, the WBL program doubled in numbers."

One student who completed the CTA's IT course, Caedmon Russell, interned with the town of South Boston as it underwent a multi-phase infrastructure project in November of 2020. Russell gained valuable experience completing the initial setup for dozens of computers, installing new IT equipment, responding to help-desk calls and assisting in repairing a range of hardware and software issues.

"Our business partners have an invaluable gift to give back to the communities — educating our youth in trade fields and showing them the reality of working environments. A classroom cannot provide this," Mettler stated.

Since the implementation of the new program, CTA's Work-Based Learning module has awarded certificates to seven students in two fields: IT and Industrial Technology with a focus on energy (formerly called CTA-Mechatronics).

WBL student Ethan Arnold, who completed mechatronics and interned at Oval Machining, highly recommends the CTA opportunity to others.

"The classes at SVHEC were a wonderful experience. If you have the opportunity to take one of the courses here, I would jump on that chance."



CTA level 2 work-based learning student Danielle Gilbert on the job at AJ's Transport in South Boston, Va.





# TECHNICAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES





# Multiple Funding Partners Make Center for Nursing Excellence Refresh Possible

SVHEC's Center of Nursing Excellence (CNE) was launched in 2008 as a regional center giving students access to the full continuum of nursing education. With an advanced simulation lab, simulated hospital setting and classroom, the CNE has served hundreds of students and healthcare professionals over the past 13 years.

Looking ahead to the next decade, SVHEC leadership identified the need for a CNE "refresh." With a budget of a half-million dollars, the CNE refresh will enhance clinical training by replacing and upgrading the CNE's simulation and audio-visual equipment.

"This new equipment will provide our educational partners and their nursing students, 99% of whom go on to work in the community, the benefit of honing their nursing skills on the most up-to-date simulation mannequins. This is a real game-changer for us," said Dr. Betty H. Adams, SVHEC executive director.

In FY 2021, SVHEC staff sought out grant funding to make the refresh a reality. The grant-writing team garnered awards from multiple funding partners to fully fund the project:

- **Sentara Healthcare — \$180,000**
- **Chastain Home for Gentlewomen — \$6,745**
- **Microsoft Corp., — \$28,255**
- **Southern Virginia Higher Education Foundation — \$35,000**
- **Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission — \$250,000**

Equipment purchases are slated to begin in FY 2022. Because the students who train in the CNE today will be part of Southern Virginia's healthcare workforce tomorrow, there's nothing more important than providing them with the very best simulation experience. Thanks to the collaborative contributions of our funding partners, the next decade of CNE operations is very bright.

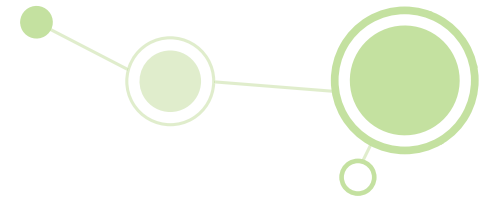


**Sentara Healthcare presents an award to SVHEC in support of the CNE program.**



**Upgrading this SimMan manikin is one of the enhancements that will take place during the CNE Refresh project.**

# SVHEC Pivots to Hold Virtual Completion Ceremony



Scan to  
view the  
ceremony

In March of 2020, our community, state, and world were impacted by a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. All manner of turmoil ensued — social, economic, and political. The impact on SVHEC workforce training students was immediate. Most found their training paused with no idea of when classes would resume. Others shifted to online education and attempted hands-on learning in a virtual environment.



In spite of these challenges, almost 200 Career Tech Academy, HVAC@SVHEC, IT Academy@SVHEC, Welding@SVHEC and Customized Training participants completed training in 2020 and 2021. Normally, SVHEC celebrates program completers with a large, in-person ceremony. But as the threat of COVID-19 lingered, SVHEC leaders saw there was no safe way to hold the traditional event.

A team of SVHEC staff pivoted to holding a virtual ceremony, working for months planning, developing content, and gathering information. SVHEC's first virtual workforce training completion ceremony went live on June 24, 2021 at 6 p.m. Program completers were invited to join with their family and friends to watch and celebrate their accomplishments.

During the virtual ceremony, Virginia Secretary of Education Atif Qarni provided special remarks saluting the completers for finishing their programs in such trying times.

"You all persevered—you kept going on with your programs. You never gave up," Qarni said. "That's why we're here today: to recognize and celebrate all the completers and their families who have stood by them for going the extra mile to improve not only your lives but the lives of your families, and enhance your careers and eventually also help your communities."

Sec. Qarni went on to encourage program completers to continue focusing on their education. "Keep getting more and more credentials, more training so you can continue serving your communities. You can do this. You have a proven track record."

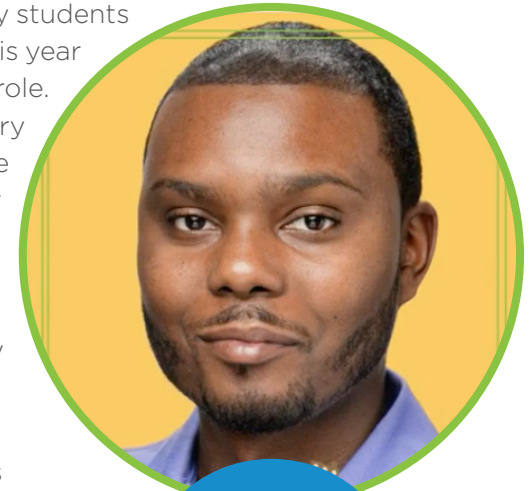


# Virtual Completion Ceremony Leads to Job Opportunity

During the virtual completion ceremony, Linda Owen, principal at Sydnor-Jennings Elementary School, saw **Andrew Barksdale Jr.**, one of the IT Academy's program completers. Owen immediately recognized Barksdale Jr., as he was then working as head custodian for her school. It just so happened that Sydnor-Jennings' Local Area Network (LAN) computer lab manager had recently retired, and the position was still open. After the completion ceremony, Owen reached out to Barksdale Jr. and encouraged him to apply. He did and was eventually selected as the top candidate.

"It was tremendous when my students came back in the building this year and saw him in a different role. Not only is he a success story for his family but also for the boys and young ladies in our building. They can see that when you get an education you can move up and get different jobs, and it's truly an inspiration."

Linda Owen,  
Principal of Sydnor-Jennings  
Elementary School



Scan to read  
Andrew's  
full story



## Student Profile



**Vara Chandler**

### From Cotton Fiber to Fiber Optics: Vara Chandler's Story

After almost 35 years as a machine operator in the yarn industry, Vara Chandler took a leap of faith to pursue something completely different — a career in the information technology field. Vara had always been interested in computers and IT and had taken some classes “here and there through the years.” Eventually, while still working, she decided to attend college full time and earned an Associate of Applied Science in Information Systems Technology from Southside Virginia Community College in 2005.

Vara continued working for Clover Yarns, but in 2015, SVHEC opened the IT Academy, and her love for IT was piqued again.

“When I started seeing ads in the newspaper about the SVHEC IT Academy, I wanted to take the class, but because I worked from 4 p.m. until 12 a.m., I couldn’t.”

In May of 2019, Vara was laid off. She determined that it was time to carve a new career path, transitioning from cotton fiber to fiber optics. She enrolled in the IT Academy@SVHEC in early 2020.

“I tried to enroll in the class for August 2019, but my paperwork wasn’t processed in time, so I had to wait for the January session of the class to begin. When I started the class, I said ‘Oh my word, what have I gotten myself into!’ I remember telling my family that it seemed as though everyone in the class had some background in the field but me.



“In the beginning it seemed as though every assignment we had to do, I had to do more because something else would happen to my computer that wasn’t part of the assignment, and I had to fix that first. But it never made me want to give up. I realized that I was just getting extra practice. It soon became a challenge that I looked forward to every day.

“The instructors were great. They had patience with us, and we even had some extra study time set up outside of class. To be able to read how to perform a certain task, then to be able to perform the task in class was awesome. I think that was the best part. To actually have the ability to have the hands-on experience helped me the most. It also made the class more exciting.

“I didn’t know it at the time, but it also gave me a good introduction to the new job I would soon be landing. It helped me to get an understanding of servers and their use in the technology world.”

Vara completed the A+/Server+ training program in August 2020. In January 2021 she landed an internship at the Microsoft Datacenter in Boydton, Va. After excelling during her internship, she was offered a full-time job as a datacenter technician just five months later.

“Because of the IT education I received at the IT Academy, I was able to obtain a job at Microsoft,” said Vara. “It is a totally new working environment for me. I have met a lot of new people. I am learning so many new things. I truly feel God had a plan for me when I took my very first class, but I couldn’t see it. When Clover Yarns closed, a door was shut, but at the same time a door was opened for me. Had that not happened I might not have ever achieved my dream job. God is so good.”



## Grants Allow Students to Test Drive IT Careers with IT Fundamentals+

In FY 2020, a \$500,000 grant from the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (TRRC) and a \$200,000 donation from Microsoft Corporation opened the door to a significant expansion for the IT Academy@SVHEC (ITA). We completed the renovation of an additional 2,162 square feet of training space, adding an additional classroom, repair center and office space; hired two full-time instructors; and expanded program offerings.

One of the most significant changes was the launch of a new 10-week IT Fundamentals+ course. The course is taught by full-time ITA instructor Jacob Cook. TRRC grant funding made Cook's position and the expanded course offering possible.

IT Fundamentals+ is the starting point for students to "skill up" and earn certifications to prepare for a career in IT. "This course helps students figure out early on if they want to pursue an IT career and which pathway is right for them," said Kelly Shotwell, IT Academy director.

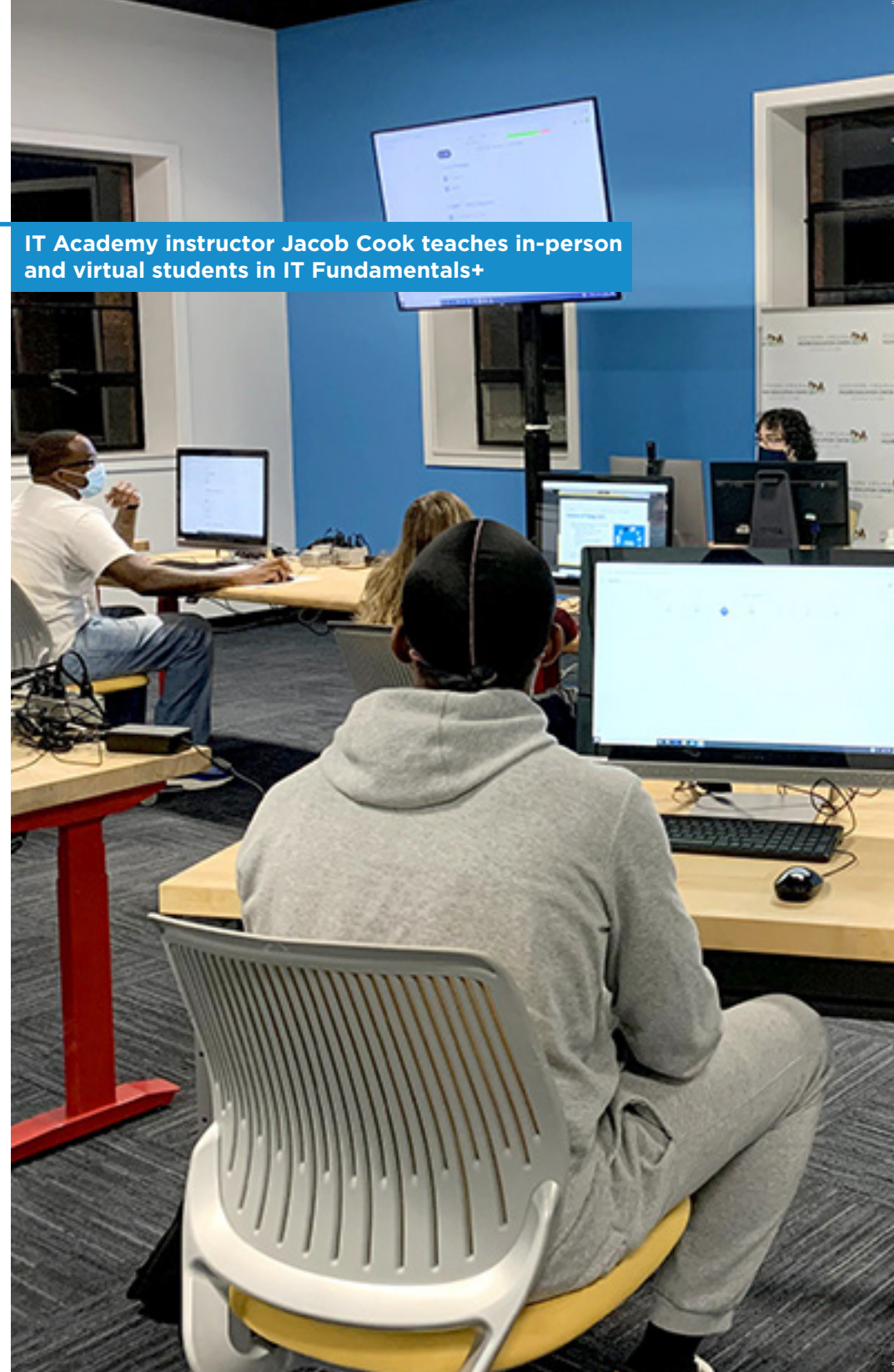
Through classroom instruction and online guided activities, students learn skills for:

- Setting up peripherals and establishing and securing a network connection to a laptop or PC
- Using features and functions of common operating systems
- Managing software applications
- Database fundamentals

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ITA staff developed IT Fundamentals+ with both in-person and virtual options, which has increased access for individuals who require the flexibility of online learning.

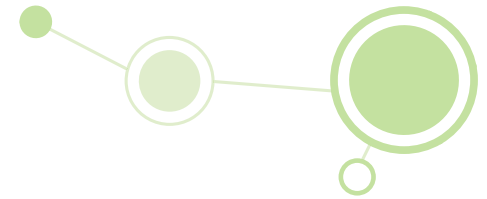
After completing IT Fundamentals+, students who wish to continue their career journey through the IT Academy enroll in ITA's four-month A+/Server+ course.

**IT Academy instructor Jacob Cook teaches in-person and virtual students in IT Fundamentals+**





# SVHEC/DCC Partnership Leads to Unique, Customized Training Solution



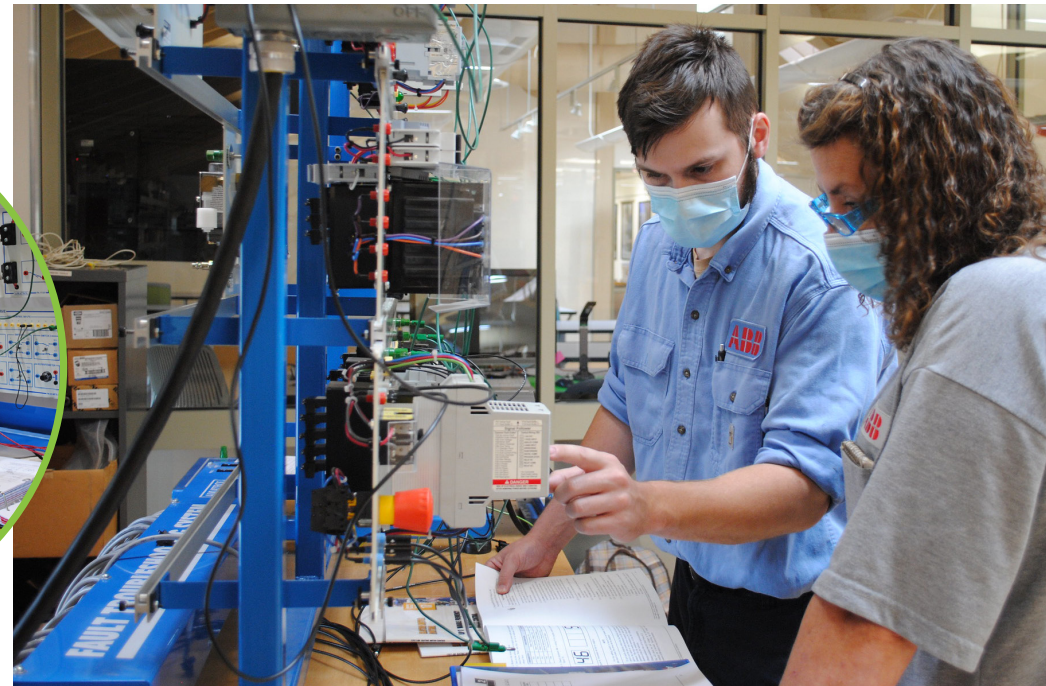
Halifax County employer Hitachi Energy (formerly Hitachi ABB) is a global leader in providing innovative solutions for the world's power grid. When the company's leadership recognized a need for skilled technicians to support its growing business, the group turned to the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) and its educational partners for a customized training solution.

Through a series of conversations, SVHEC and Danville Community College (DCC) partnered to create a unique training solution to upskill 21 Hitachi Energy employees. The Maintenance Mechanics Certificate is a 15-month, hands-on program providing competency in several core areas, including reading blueprints and electrical drawings, wiring electrical circuits, troubleshooting control circuits, and repairing essential mechanical and electrical equipment. SVHEC's Mechatronics Program Leader Ricky Gordon provides course instruction three days per week, pairing in-person lectures with hands-on labs at SVHEC.

Early results have been overwhelmingly positive. Hitachi Energy is seeing reduced time to talent and equipment downtime, as well as increased productivity and employee morale.

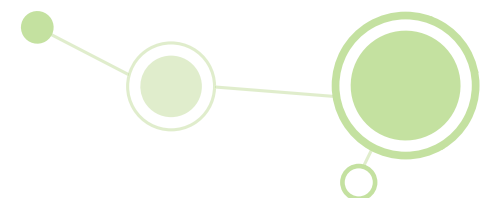


**Maintenance mechanics participate in hands-on labs during Hitachi Energy customized training.**





# Alliance Brings EMT Training to Halifax County

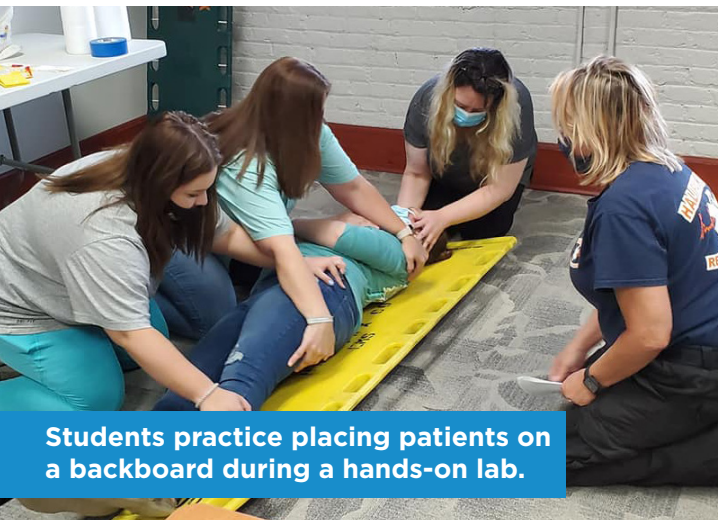


A partnership with Danville Community College (DCC) brought Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training to SVHEC in spring 2021. Interest in the training program was immediate and strong with the first course filling within weeks.

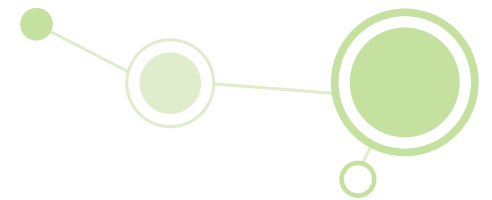
Taught by veteran EMT Ray Mason, the nine-month program meets three nights a week, preparing students to sit for the Virginia EMT-B exam. Classroom instruction is paired with hands-on practice to give students an opportunity to build their fundamental skills in emergency medicine.

SVHEC's advanced simulation lab within the Center of Nursing Excellence (CNE) provides an additional training resource. The CNE's high-fidelity manikins give EMT students an opportunity to practice skills difficult to replicate in a classroom setting. One example is the popular live birth scenario. Aided by the CNE's birthing simulator, students practice delivering a baby with and without complications.

**Student Andrew Matteson is employed by the Department of Forestry and is pursuing EMT training to gain needed skills. "We don't have a lot of EMTs in the field and out west when fighting wild fires. I thought it would be great to get my EMT certification to better help my agency here in Halifax County and out west on our fire lines."**



## A Connected Technical Training Staff— The Secret to Our Success



SVHEC's hands-on training programs consistently produce skilled completers who are able to find and maintain employment after training. Our success starts with highly skilled instructors who have years of industry experience. Through professional development and engagement with their industries, these instructors work diligently to maintain and grow their skills. Celebrating professional development milestones in FY 2021 are:



**Kimberly Throckmorton**,  
Center of Nursing Excellence Director, who  
received her Master of Science in Nursing  
(MSN) from Chamberlain University.



**Jerry Elliott** and **Christopher Walker**, R&D technicians,  
who earned NCCER Craft Instructor Certification.

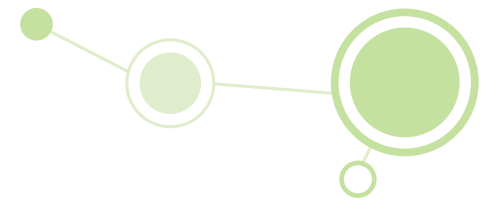


**Jacob Cook**, IT Academy instructor who earned CompTIA Network+ certification, received his Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Old Dominion University. Jacob also earned CompTIA Network+ certification.



**Travis Howerton**, IT Academy lab technician, who completed IT Fundamentals+ and A+/Server+ through IT Academy@SVHEC, earning the associated CompTIA certifications (CompTIA Fundamentals+, CompTIA A+ and CompTIA Server+). Travis assists IT Academy@SVHEC instructors with lab setup and breakdown and serves as a resource and assistant in class.

# IT Academy@SVHEC Supports IT Staff Development



On the SVHEC's bi-annual satisfaction survey, the IT team consistently receives high marks for responding to help tickets and resolving tech issues in a timely and professional manner. IT staff maintain this consistent level of excellence through their dedication to professional development. Staff members stay current on technological trends and changes to the industry, and pursue training and advanced certifications.



Since the IT Academy@SVHEC opened in 2015, it has served as an in-house training resource for SVHEC's IT staff. These staff members work a full shift and then attend classes in the evening. They receive no preferential treatment and must meet course requirements and study and test for CompTIA certifications like all other students.



**In FY 2021:**

**Aaron Chandler,**  
SVHEC IT & Operations Manager, completed the IT Academy's Linux+ course.



**Jeremy Newton,**  
IT Technician, completed IT Academy's Security Foundations and earned CompTIA Security+ certification.

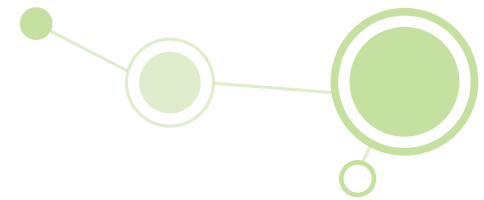


**Bradley Shores,** Operations Front Desk Support Specialist, completed the IT Academy's A+/Server course and earned CompTIA A+ and CompTIA Server+ Credentials. Bradley uses his strong IT skills to support students and instructors during evening hours.

**"I am responsible for numerous servers, some of which are Linux-based. I was able to immediately utilize the skills provided by the IT Academy for my job. Having the right tools in your toolbox sure does make things easier." -Aaron Chandler**



# New Centralized Office Strengthens Support Networks for Workforce Training Students



## Your opportunity lives here.

It's not just a tagline for Southern Virginia Higher Education Center; it's a commitment. To ensure workforce training students have equitable access to opportunities and support for their continued success, the SVHEC opened the Office of Learner Success and Engagement (OLSE) to provide centralized student support services. The office sits under the umbrella of SVHEC's student and partner advancement department and is led by Director Amy Cole.

"From the time a student is interested in a program until they complete a program and are seeking employment, they can come to us," said Meagan Owen, SVHEC Coordinator of Learner Success. "If they need program information. If they need literacy support services. If they have personal issues that are standing in the way of them completing the program. Whatever the need, someone from our office will be tasked with following up with them throughout the program."

"We want to help students feel more connected to the higher ed center, and if they start to struggle, we'll be there to help them along the way," said Cole, explaining that the OLSE functions like a one-stop shop. "Students don't have to go find this person on campus or that person on campus. We're eliminating those challenges and making it easier for our students to succeed."

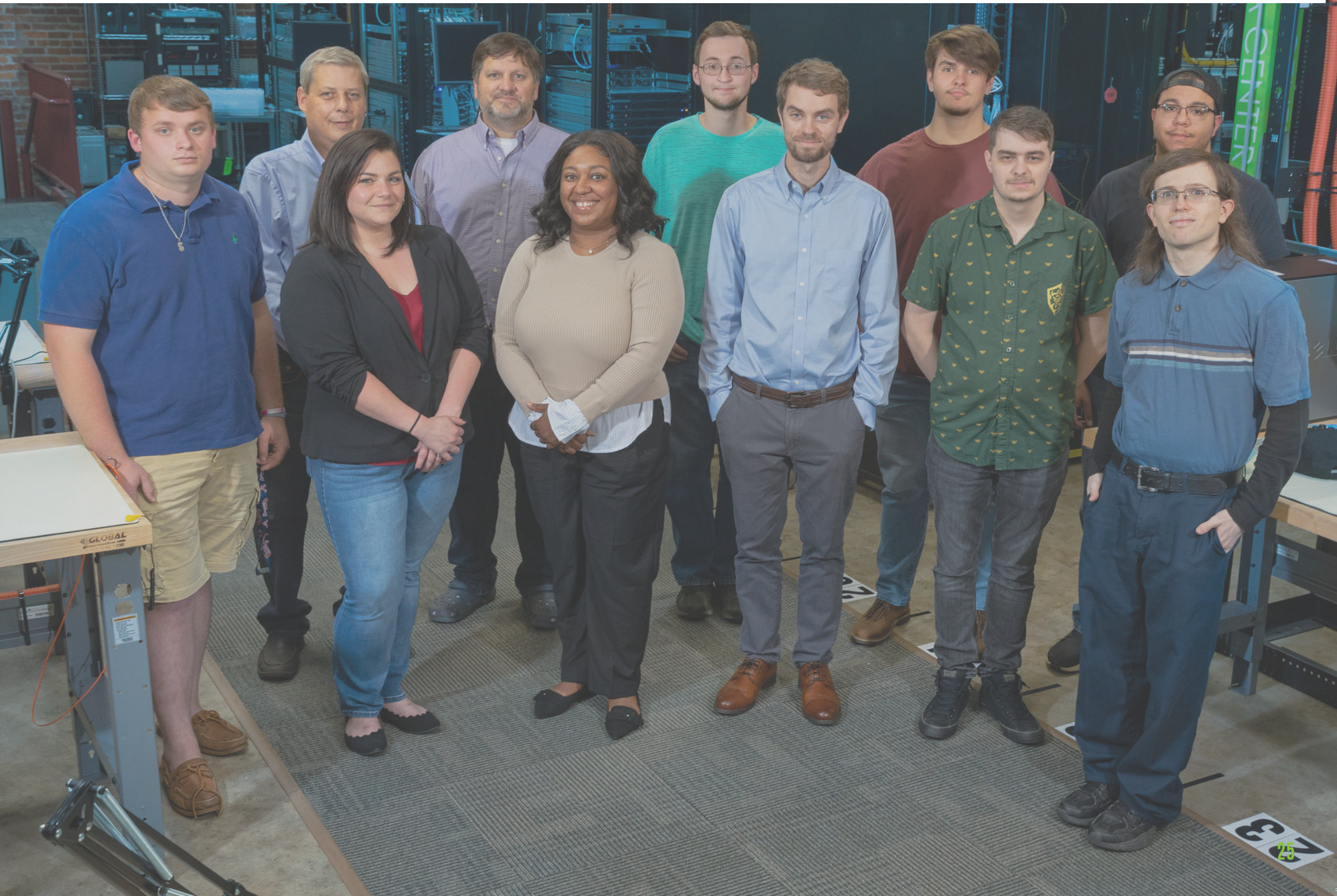
The OLSE is already having an impact, with staff reporting an increase in the number of students who reach out when they have an issue. OLSE will also host student-centered events and activities to strengthen connections and sense of belonging.



**OLSE Team (left to right): Amy Cole, Director of Student & Partner Advancement; Virginia Byrd, Finance & Student Services Administrator; Meagan Owen, Coordinator of Student Success & Engagement**



# DEGREE OPPORTUNITIES





# SVHEC & EOC Join Forces to Support Students at Financial Aid Saturday Event

As the COVID-19 pandemic stretched into the spring of 2021, media outlets across the region, state, and nation sounded the alarm over the reduced number of Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completed. In April 2021, FAFSA submissions were down 8.2% nationally and 8.7% in Virginia.

In Southern Virginia specifically, the decline was even sharper with a double-digit decrease. The decline can be seen in just two high schools served by SVHEC. At Randolph-Henry High School in Charlotte County, submitted applications were down 15%; at Bluestone High School in Mecklenburg County, the decline was 39%.

## G3: Get a Skill, Get a Job, Get Ahead

During FY 2021, the Commonwealth of Virginia launched the new G3 tuition assistance program for community college students. Under G3 guidelines, any Virginia resident who qualifies for in-state financial aid and falls below specific income levels is eligible for funding to pursue training in Virginia's most in-demand industries: early childhood education, healthcare, information technology, public safety, and skilled trades. G3 provides "last dollar" assistance, making up the difference after other grant aid has been exhausted. Students who meet all eligibility requirements can complete training and earn stackable credentials with no out-of-pocket expense.

Community college students attending classes at SVHEC are using G3 money to pursue training in nursing (RN and PN), information systems technology, human services, health sciences, medical office assisting, and cybersecurity and networking foundation.

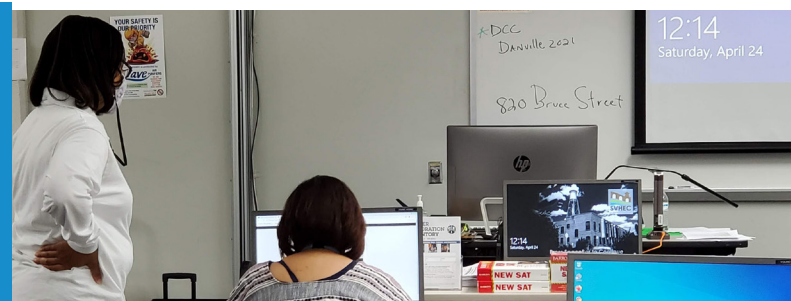
"In the fall we would typically go to the high schools to try to raise college awareness and educate seniors. Then in January we would do FAFSA nights," said Sharon Harris, project director of TRIO Educational Opportunity Center (EOC). "These events were always well attended by students and their parents. We have tried doing webinars and online workshops, but these have not been well-received. People are desiring face-to-face engagement."

Seeing the need for an intervention, the TRIO EOC, SVHEC, and the Community Colleges (DCC & SVCC) partnered to offer "Financial Aid Saturday: Get Money for School," held at the SVHEC on April 24 and May 8.

Trained EOC staff were on site assisting attendees as they completed the FAFSA form, started the college enrollment process, and applied for scholarships. SVHEC and college partner staff provided information on college-degree and workforce-training programs.

Pleased with the results and immediate impact, SVHEC and its partners plan to make Financial Aid Saturday an annual event.

**Camille Younger, TRIO EOC Financial Aid Specialist, provides one-on-one FAFSA assistance during the Financial Aid Saturday event.**



## Using G3 Funds: Jenna Warren

**"Being a part of Southside's nursing program has opened up so many doors for me, and receiving this grant has helped me get one step closer to achieving my goal of becoming a nurse."**

**- Jenna Warren, Southside VA Community College ADN student and G3 grant recipient**

Learn more at [www.virginiag3.com](http://www.virginiag3.com)

# SVHEC Plays Expanded Role in Engineering Collaborative

The Commonwealth's oldest educational collaborative, Cardinal Education (formerly known as the Commonwealth Graduate Engineering Program), has selected the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center to manage and coordinate its centralized student support and enrollment services.

Starting in spring of 2021, SVHEC assumed responsibility for promoting Cardinal Education, recruiting and retaining students, maintaining the website, and working collaboratively with statewide officials to advance strategic goals.



## CARDINAL EDUCATION

Graduate Engineering and Science Degrees  
from Virginia's Public Universities

"Cardinal Education has been a pioneer in distributed learning for over 30 years," said Bob Bailey, Executive Director of the Center for Advanced Engineering and Research. "SVHEC's new role in providing stronger centralized professional development services to Virginia's working engineers will further enhance the program's ability to support Virginia's valuable science and engineering industries."

Cardinal Education is a distance-learning graduate engineering program comprised of six Virginia universities: George Mason University (GMU), Old Dominion University (ODU), Virginia State University (VSU), University of Virginia (UVA), Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and Virginia Tech (VT). Cardinal Education offers individuals the opportunity to earn graduate certificates or master's degrees part-time online.





## SVHEC-ODU Partnership Highlights Tech Careers

Technology careers are in demand and offer individuals good pay in a growing industry. Microsoft's data center in Boydton, Va., is a significant tech employer in Southern Virginia. However, many other industries — from school systems and healthcare to manufacturing — are also hiring tech talent.

In FY 2021, SVHEC teamed up with partner Old Dominion University (ODU) to spotlight tech-focused bachelor's degrees. This new Tech Talent initiative assists students with understanding careers in technology and helping them map an educational path from high school and community college to a bachelor's degree at ODU. Because students can complete 100% of their ODU degree online, the Tech Talent initiative is targeted to Career Tech Academy students, high school seniors, community college students, IT Academy completers, and career switchers.

"Students often hear about in-demand careers in technology, but they may not know what those jobs entail or what skills and education are required. The Tech Talent initiative works to change that by helping students understand what a career in computer science, computer engineering, or information technology looks like, and how jobs differ between the three areas," said Hope Harris-Gayles, SVHEC Associate Director of Communications and Outreach.

SVHEC and ODU hosted several virtual Q&A sessions to connect with prospective students, highlight all the paths that start at SVHEC and lead to a bachelor's degree, and provide information about applying or transferring to ODU.

SVHEC's goal is to form a cohort of students in South Boston who will enroll in the bachelor's degree program and move through it together. SVHEC resources, including a meeting space along with academic and career coaching, will support student success.

# Tap into Tech

Stay local while earning a degree in **computer science**, **computer engineering**, or **information technology**





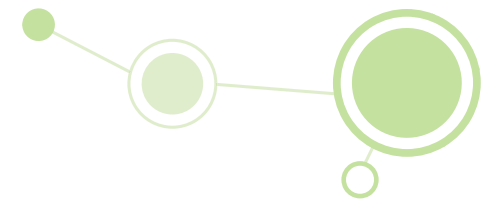
# PRODUCTWORKS OPPORTUNITIES





# SVHEC Launches New ProductWorks Brand

## Connecting Technology, Creativity, and Industry Insight



In FY 2020, SVHEC announced ProductWorks as the new brand for the former R&D Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Energy Efficiency. The announcement concluded an extensive rebranding process that included a strategic review of operations, client surveys and a focus group.

**ProductWorks' machining center. ProductWorks is the Commonwealth's only single-source location for product design and development services.**



On November 10, 2020, SVHEC held a virtual ribbon cutting to formally launch the new ProductWorks brand. In doing so, it honed in on the fact that ProductWork's is the Commonwealth of Virginia's only single-source location for product design and development services.

"We have everything an individual or business needs to move their idea from concept to market," said SVHEC Executive Director Dr. Betty Adams. "From design planning and prototyping to testing and small-production runs, ProductWorks is a one-stop shop where technology, creativity and industry insight connect."

ProductWorks' new tagline speaks to the collaborative nature of work with clients: "Your Vision. Our Resources."

Connie Nyholm, Owner and CEO of Virginia International Raceway, shared her experience working with the ProductWorks team to develop a custom trophy for the renowned racetrack. "Our experience working with ProductWorks was absolutely flawless and very easy. This is a trophy the driver actually wants to win, and we're very proud ProductWorks came up with it for us."

A collaboration with ProductWorks allowed inventor and entrepreneur Stuart Topp to move his idea from rough sketch to prototype and finally to market. Topp is now successfully selling his innovative tool, The Blind Stapler, to cabinetmakers in the United States and Canada.

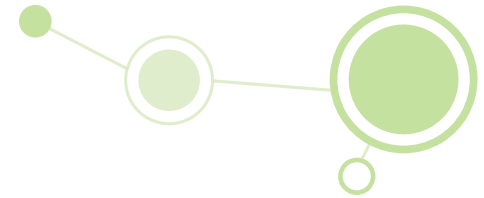
**ProductWorks' 5-axis CNC router cuts the ribbon at the brand relaunch.**



ProductWorks continues to serve as Topp's manufacturer for the Blind Stapler Tool. "I've had options to go and have bigger places manufacture the tools. I choose not to. I want to stay here; I want to keep this working," said Topp.

To further solidify the new brand, SVHEC launched a stand-alone ProductWorks website at [www.productworks.tech](http://www.productworks.tech). The website highlights ProductWorks' services, staff and project portfolio.

## Bringing Back the Love with VIR and ProductWorks



If you've traveled around the Commonwealth of Virginia, chances are you've come across one of the large LOVE signs that are part of the Virginia Tourism Corporation's LOVEworks program. LOVEworks is a state-wide branding initiative designed to promote travel in Virginia and to strengthen awareness of the "Virginia is for Lovers" message. Each sign constructs the word LOVE in a unique way that reflects local traditions and heritage.

When Virginia International Raceway (VIR) decided to be part of the LOVEworks program, they turned to ProductWorks to develop a custom sign. ProductWorks staff used an outline of VIR's iconic track as the signature component for the design. Staff then fabricated and mounted the sign on a trailer provided by VIR.

The new LOVEworks sign is on permanent display at the racetrack where visitors and race fans are encouraged to stop, take photos and share the love on social media.

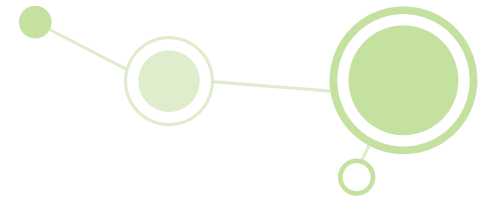
For more information on Virginia Tourism and the LOVEworks program visit [www.virginia.org/love](http://www.virginia.org/love).

**Custom LOVE sign created by ProductWorks for Virginia International Raceway**





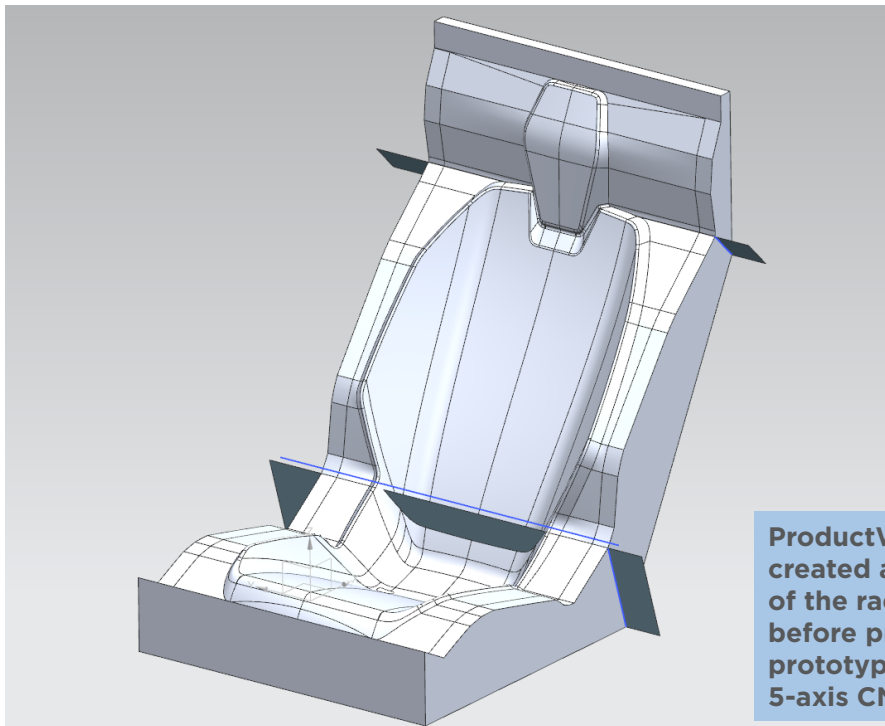
## TMI Autotech Enlists ProductWorks to Develop Racing Seat Prototype



TMI AutoTech, Inc. is an established vehicle manufacturer located in South Boston, Va. Two of TMI's best-known vehicles, the Ariel Atom Supercar and the Ariel Nomad Urban Assault Vehicle, are built from the ground up at a 60,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Halifax County. While TMI has extensive design, engineering, fabrication and manufacturing capabilities, the company contracts with ProductWorks to leverage its vast resources and expertise in product design and development.

In a recent project, TMI partnered with ProductWorks to produce the prototype of a racing seat. Using 3D modeling and 5-axis CNC router technology, ProductWorks staff programmed, fixtured and machined the prototype. After satisfactory evaluation, ProductWorks moved to the manufacturing phase, using the prototype as a mold to produce a fully realized racing seat.

According to TMI Autotech President and co-owner Mark Swain, this type of collaboration with ProductWorks allows the company to remain nimble in a fast-paced market. "We're Virginia's only four-wheel vehicle manufacturer, so we need to prototype tooling on the fly, very quickly. A lot of the ways we utilize this facility is through waterjet cutting for tooling or sheet metal components, as well as some rapid prototyping that lets us get on it a lot quicker than we would've if we had to do this in-house."



**ProductWorks staff created a CAD model of the racing seat before producing the prototype using a 5-axis CNC router.**



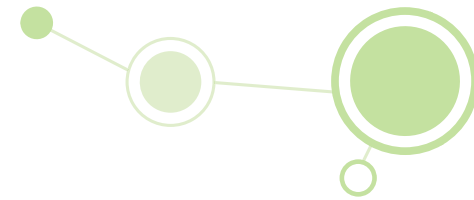


# ECONOMIC IMPACT





# Economic Impact



 **307**

CREDENTIALS EARNED  
THROUGH SVHEC WORKFORCE  
TRAINING PROGRAMS

 **88%**

WORKFORCE  
TRAINING PROGRAM  
COMPLETION RATE

 **33,811**

WORKFORCE  
TRAINING HOURS  
DELIVERED

 **72**

TUTORING HOURS PROVIDED  
BY THE VOLUNTEER LITERACY/  
ESL PROGRAM

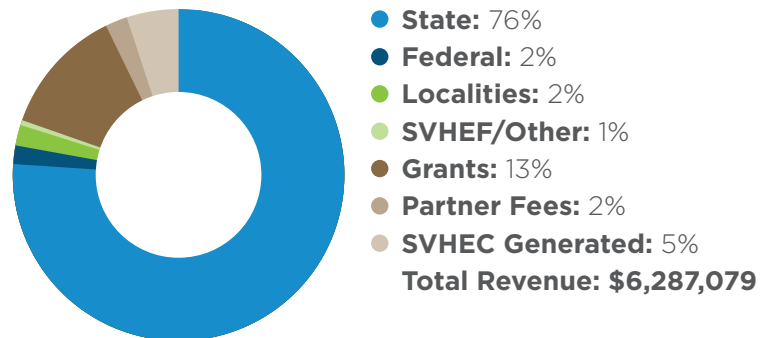
WORKFORCE TRAINING STUDENTS WHO  
RECEIVED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH  
THE COMMONWEALTH'S NEW CGP

 **52%**

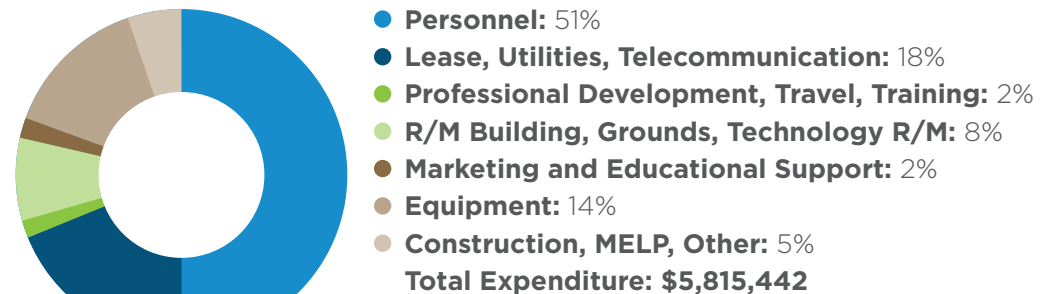
COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAREER  
STUDIES CERTIFICATES AWARDED TO  
CAREER TECH ACADEMY STUDENTS

 **16**

## Revenues



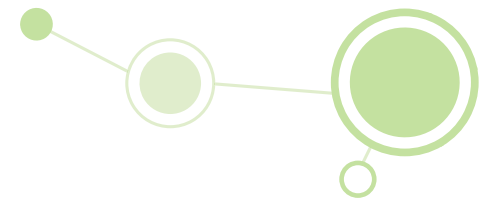
## Expenditures



TOTAL AGENCY EXPENDITURES: **\$3,993,693**

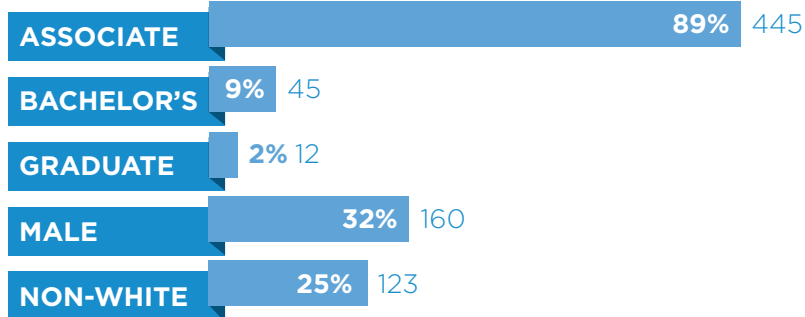
STATE FUNDING: **\$4,782,730**





# Enrollment

## FOR-CREDIT TOTAL STUDENTS: 1,287\*



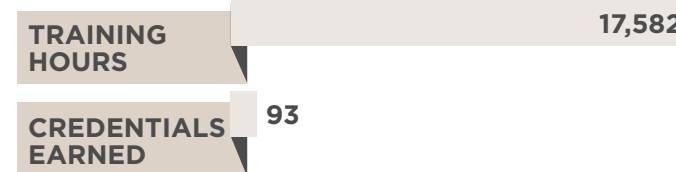
## AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS: 176



## LITERACY TOTAL STUDENTS:



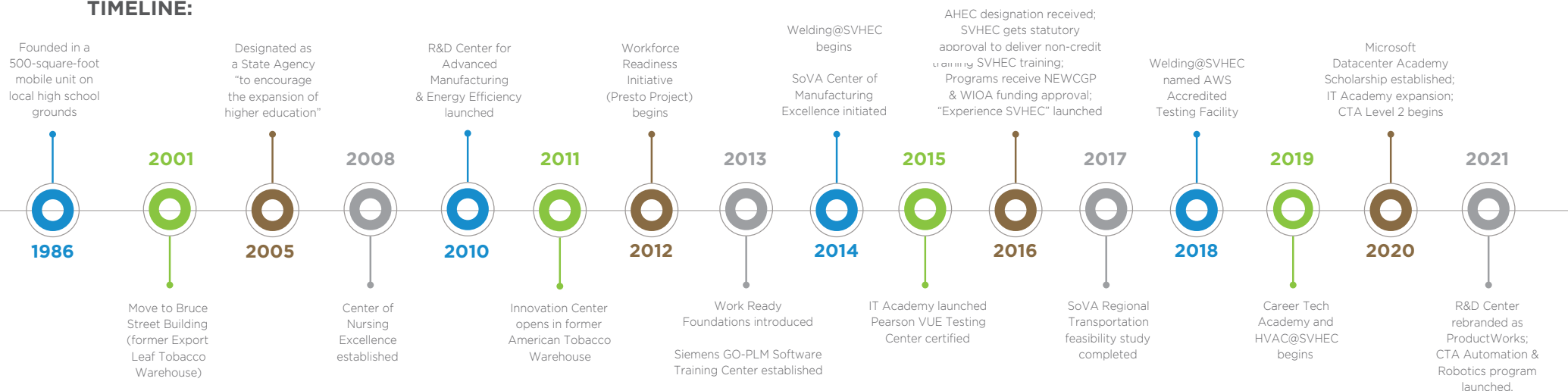
## CAREER TECH ACADEMY: 37



## WORKFORCE TRAINING: 148



## TIMELINE:



## Partners and Affiliates

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- 3PK
- ACT
- American Heart Association
- American Welding Society
- AmeriCorps ServeIT
- Amtex Company, Inc.
- Arrington's Home Furnishings, Inc.
- Automation Technologies, Inc. (ATI)
- Better Block Foundation
- Cardinal Education (formerly Commonwealth Graduate Engineering Program)
- Charlotte County Public Schools
- Comfort Systems USA
- CompTIA, Inc.
- County of Halifax
- Dan River Region Collaborative
- Danville Community College
- Danville-Pittsylvania Chamber of Commerce
- Danville, Va. Transit System
- Department of Rehabilitative Services, Danville, Va.
- Destination Downtown South Boston, Va.
- DirectLine
- Dollar General Distribution Center
- Dollar General Literacy Foundation
- Elliott Electric, Inc.
- EMPOWER Broadband, Inc.
- Essel Propack
- gener8tor Upskilling
- Global Center for Automotive Performance Simulation
- Great Opportunities in Technology and Engineering Careers (GO-TEC)
- Halifax County Board of Supervisors
- Halifax County Chamber of Commerce
- Halifax County Industrial Development Authority
- Halifax County Public Schools
- Health Occupations of America (HOSA) Virginia Chapter
- Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)
- Henrietta Lacks Commission
- Hitachi Energy (formerly ABB)
- Institute for Advanced Learning & Research
- Intelliverse Solutions Group, LLC.
- International Woodworking Fair-Atlanta
- JP Superior Solutions
- Letterpress Communications
- Lewis Metal Works
- The Lincoln Electric Company
- Longwood Small Business Development Center, Western Region
- Longwood University
- Mecklenburg County Public Schools
- Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative
- Merck & Co., Inc.
- Microsoft Corporation
- Microsoft Data Center
- Microsoft Datacenter Community Advisory Board
- Microsoft TechSpark
- Mid-Atlantic Broadband Communities Corporation
- Mid-Atlantic Surfaces



- 
- National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER)
  - National Health Services Corp
  - New College Institute
  - Non Typical Outdoors
  - Old Dominion University
  - O.S. Kelly Company
  - Piedmont Community College
  - Pearson Vue Assessment and Testing Center@SVHEC
  - Pittsylvania County Public Schools
  - Place Fab, Inc.
  - Propel GPS
  - Power Systems & Controls (PS&C)
  - R&S Racing
  - River City Systems, Inc.
  - Rogers Heating & Cooling
  - Sentara Halifax Regional Hospital
  - Siemens Mechatronic Systems Certification Program
  - South Central Workforce Development Board
  - Southern Piedmont Technology Council (SPTC)
  - Southern Virginia Higher Education Foundation
  - Southern Virginia Regional Medical Center
  - Southside Behavioral Health
  - Southside Health Education Foundation
  - Southside Outreach Group
  - Southside Virginia Community College
  - Southside Wellness Coalition
  - Sovah Health-Danville
  - SoVA Innovation Hub
  - SoVA Rise Collaborative
  - Steinway & Sons
  - Stokes Manufacturing
  - Stover, LLC.
  - Strategic Heating and Air, Inc.
  - TEKSystems
  - The Lincoln Electric Company
  - The Chastain Home for Gentlemen
  - The Prizery
  - Topp Line, Inc.
  - Town of Halifax
  - Town of South Boston
  - United States Forest Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - VCU-Community Memorial Health Center
  - Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority
  - Virginia Technical Institute
  - Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission
  - Virginia Career Works, Central Region - Lynchburg, Va.
  - Virginia Career Works-South Boston Center
  - Virginia's New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Program (NEW CGP)
  - Walmart Distribution Center
  - West Piedmont Workforce Development Board
  - Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Case Managers





SOUTHERN VIRGINIA  
HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER



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**CONNECT WITH THE SVHEC**

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