

MCC and Kodak Partner to Train Region's Next Generation Workforce

New site at Eastman Business Park will focus on careers in advanced manufacturing and skilled trades

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – Nov. 30, 2016 – Revitalization efforts continue at Eastman Business Park (EBP) as Kodak teams up with Monroe Community College (MCC) to establish the Finger Lakes Workforce Development (FWD) Center in the park. The partnership was formed in response to the region's demand for skilled workers across a variety of manufacturing sectors and technical occupations. The FWD Center will support the Pathways to Prosperity focus of the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council plan and is designed to connect individuals with the skills needed to advance in today's economy.

MCC will offer manufacturing-oriented programs and skilled trades training within classroom and lab space at EBP — in the same location where thousands of skilled Kodak workers learned their trades over the years.

The regional facility will be newly outfitted with portable training equipment to support MCC's curricula, including courses in mechatronics, a multidisciplinary field that incorporates engineering, mechanics, electronics and other technical learning. A portion of the dedicated space in the facility will be used for noncredit apprenticeship training for skilled trades careers, such as electricians and pipefitters.

"MCC's vision for the center includes creating flexible spaces that support a variety of programs and allow us to quickly modify programming to match the skills the College has measured as being most in demand within the region's key technology clusters," said Todd Oldham, vice president of MCC's Economic Development and Innovative Workforce Services Division.

According to Dolores Kruchten, president of Eastman Business Park, landing a workforce development program on the same site as many companies within those key clusters — including photonics, energy, chemical processing and food processing — provides a great resource for some of Rochester's newest entrepreneurs and employers.

"We are thrilled to be working with MCC to help provide well-trained employees to companies within the region, especially those that have chosen to locate at EBP," said Kruchten. "The workforce development center is a key plank in our strategy to revitalize the Park as a hub where learning, development, innovation and manufacturing are happening at accelerated rates."

Currently, Eastman Business Park's 1,200-acre campus is home to over 60 tenant companies and owners, representing approximately 5,000 non-Kodak employees today.

Several of these employers have expressed interest in sending their employees for training at the new site at EBP, as well as hiring its newly minted graduates. These same companies will also be an important element in future on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs MCC plans to offer at EBP.

"Workforce development is one of the most important issues facing employers today," said Phil Viruso, vice president of LiDestri Foods. "The advanced manufacturing sector requires a skilled labor pool, and we must invest in growing that next generation of workers. Having this Center at Eastman Business Park enables us to participate in developing qualified technicians, and ultimately to benefit from the new talent pipeline that's being created here."

The first phase of the facility's development will be funded through \$6 million in NYSUNY 2020 awards, with the remaining phases being supported by \$5.4 million in Upstate Revitalization Initiative grants through Empire State Development. Additionally, the project will leverage the recently awarded \$6 million grant through the federal America's Promise initiative, and a private investment of \$320,000 from JPMorgan Chase, to support student tuition and fees for qualified students and programs. The project funds will be used to drive economic development and manufacturing jobs growth by building out a manufacturing ecosystem on site at the Park to enable commercialization of new technologies.

"The workforce development center will provide tremendous value across the region," said Oldham. "It will connect individuals to economic opportunities by training them in skills that will prepare them for jobs needed in the region. It will be a boon to businesses at EBP and in the region and help strengthen important sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, within our local economy. My thanks go to Governor Cuomo and Empire State Development, SUNY, Eastman Kodak and Eastman Business Park for their partnership in making this important initiative possible."

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