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Media Contact: Dawn Dovre, 605.773.3094

Labor Department invests in RTEC programs for laid off workers

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Labor (DOL) has partnered with the Regional Technical Education Center (RTEC) at Yankton to expand the stick-welding program and upgrade the computer numerical control (CNC) machining program.

DOL provided RTEC \$11,000 to purchase five more stick-welding machines and \$77,668 for the CNC machining program to purchase seven computers, more advanced software, two lathes and a three-dimensional printer.

“Workers who have lost their jobs can learn valuable new skill sets through either of these programs,” said State Labor Secretary Pam Roberts. “There is both an immediate and future demand for employees with these skills.”

Introduction to Stick Welding is a 40-hour course that will now have room for up to 13 students. New classes start monthly. The course teaches the principles of Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW). Upon completion of the class, students can take the American Welding Society (AWS) certification test.

The CNC machining class began June 30 and is 210 hours long. It has incorporated new technology and green concepts used in advanced manufacturing. The next class begins in January and will take up to 23 students.

“Laid-off workers may each be eligible for up to \$5,200 in tuition assistance from DOL,” said Secretary Roberts. “Our staff is available to help workers identify and enroll in workforce training opportunities leading to new careers.”

To determine eligibility for tuition assistance, DOL considers workers’ current employment status, need to learn new technologies to find good jobs and determination to support themselves and their families.

Anyone interested in learning more about the training and tuition assistance should visit with their local DOL office. Information on other training opportunities and a directory of DOL offices is found at www.sdjobs.org.