

Sparky's Current Events

Job Fair

The Job Fair on Friday, October 22 was attended by 28 businesses and 40 students! Many résumés exchanged hands, offers were made, invitations to visit properties were extended, and more interviews were scheduled. With the many options and offerings for VTA students, there were no immediate job acceptances. Students wanted time to think about their choices. This is a luxury many people do not have: multiple job offers!

It's not often a trade school goes to these lengths to help their students find jobs, but VTA believes in setting up their students for success. Preparing first time jobseekers by helping them write their résumés, instructors giving mock interviews with the students to have them practice what they are going to say about themselves, all contribute to a successful outcome.

The businesses that attended were enthusiastic also. They were very excited to meet the VTA students and eager to fill many job openings. To them a big THANK YOU for coming to the VTA job fair!



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Candidate Glenn Youngkin visits VTA!

Gubernatorial candidate Glenn Youngkin made a visit to Virginia Technical Academy on October 7. He sat down with a small group of current students and local contractors. Students introduced themselves and talked about their experiences at VTA and how they see their training as a positive path to jobs and careers. Several students see their trade career helping them earn enough money for college degrees later, whether it be in engineering or business administration. Contractors spoke mostly about the lack of funding for students to come to VTA. There are plenty trade jobs, but to find and hire trained people is still difficult.

Mr. Youngkin then met with a larger group, with Councilwoman Pat Woodbury introducing him to the audience. The candidate spoke about achieving the American dream and how he, as a businessman, can solve problems and create jobs. He talked about cutting the grocery tax, and how to better train people who have lost jobs during the pandemic.

In addition to Mr. Youngkin's visit, VTA had Arlene Klindedinst, Chapter President of the National Association of Women in Construction, present a scholarship award to Cymone King-Roberson, an electrical student at VTA. Congratulations Cymone!

In closing, Mr. Youngkin said if you vote for him, he would go to work for us. The important thing is to GO VOTE on November 2!



Above: The Honorable Dr. Patricia Woodbury, City of Newport News Councilwoman, Central District.
Below: Students talking with Mr. Youngkin.



From left to right: Glenn Youngkin, Arlene Klindedinst, Cymone King-Roberson, Shawn Avery (President and CEO of Hampton Roads Workforce Council), and VTA President, David Gillespie.



In Memoriam

On a sad note, we want to report the passing of our dear friend and colleague at the Department of Labor and Industry, Dr. Thomas Cecere. Dr. Cecere had been instrumental in helping Virginia Technical Academy establish our courses for the Registered Apprenticeship program. He and our president worked together the last five years to put together the courses and requirements for HVAC, Electrical, Plumbing and Building Maintenance. Mr. Gillespie was able to write and establish the Major Appliance course for which Dr. Cecere reviewed and accepted for the Registered Apprenticeship, the first of its kind in the U.S. Dr. Cecere had been a lifelong educator himself, working tirelessly for 50 years at various colleges, universities, secondary schools, and state agencies. Many times, Dr. Cecere would call the school and speak with our administrator, Gwen Mallory, in Italian, practicing his Italian vocabulary. He was always seeking to learn new things. We will miss his friendship and dedication to teaching.

Worker Training Tax Credit

During both Mr. McAuliffe's and Mr. Youngkin's visits to VTA, it was brought up by several contractors during the round table discussions how difficult it is for students to get financial aid to attend Virginia Technical Academy. While the school is an approved post-secondary educational facility by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, it is exempt from providing college credits. This exemption status is what makes federal and state tuition assistance out of reach for students wanting to come to VTA. The only pot of money prospective students can tap into is with the WIOA, which is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Each state receives WIOA money from the U.S. Department of Labor to fund technical training programs and Registered Apprenticeships. To date VTA has over 50 apprenticeship partners in the local community. VTA provides the classroom instruction, and the partner companies provide on-the-job learning.

The most common career path at VTA is a student will get funding from WIOA for a Level One course in a trade of their choosing. Then the student gets picked up by a local company for the on-the-job learning and the company pays for additional courses that leads to a Journeyman's trade license. Others may get enough funding from WIOA for two levels of courses and then get picked up by a contractor for apprenticeship. Either way, this is a lower cost path to a trade career than that of a community college for whoever pays.

For companies, there is a Worker Training Tax Credit (Virginia form WTC) available that applies to Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. VTA is a registered training provider with the Virginia Workforce Connection. For each qualified employee*, a company can get up to \$500, and for each non-highly compensated worker**, up to \$1,000.

VTA believes in training the future workforce in our communities. A trained and ready workforce makes us stronger and more capable to compete on a national and even on a global level. We urge companies to take part in this training as well by becoming apprenticeship sponsors. Please call us today to get started in building a stronger workforce!

From Virginia Form WTC:

* *"Qualified Employee – an employee of a business eligible for a credit in a full-time position requiring a minimum of 1,680 hours in the entire normal year of the business's operations if the standard fringe benefits are paid by the business for the employee. Employees in seasonal or temporary positions shall not qualify as qualified employees. "Qualified employee" does not include an owner or relative."*

** *"Non-Highly Compensated Worker – a worker whose income is less than Virginia's median wage, as reported by the Virginia Employment Commission, in the taxable year prior to applying for the credit. "Non-highly compensated worker" does not include an owner or relative."*



VTA Administrator, Gwen Mallory, and President, David Gillespie, at the 4th Annual Academies of Hampton My Future, My Journey Career Exploratory Program.

Newport News Dept. of Human Services Visits VTA

Members of the Newport News Department of Human Services (NNDHS) visited Virginia Technical Academy recently to tour the facility and get better acquainted with program operations and philosophy. The visits included staff from the NNDHS VIEW and Youth Services Programs, Housing Broker Team, and Four Oaks Day Center and Learning Facility. The Academy's training model, which places an emphasis on a "hands on" approach to training, resonated with the NNDHS staff, who observed that their programs operate with a similar goal of helping individuals within the local community learn skilled trades that will enable them to become self-sufficient. This learning environment is often a better fit for non-traditional students; and the supports provided, such as résumé development, mock interviewing, job placement assistance, and work tool provision, have the added benefit of boosting the confidence level of graduates entering the workforce. This focus on ensuring an individual is work ready was recognized as very consistent with NNDHS' supportive approach to helping people attain self-sufficiency, which includes monetary assistance and incentives, childcare, and transportation assistance as they pursue the training track of their choice. The VTA team described their "holistic" approach to training as well as their willingness to meet students "where they are" rather than precluding them from training opportunities based on barriers or challenges they may be experiencing. NNDHS staff were appreciative of the opportunity to visit and learn about Virginia Technical Academy, discover mutual interests and expand upon their portfolio of collaborative resources and partnerships.

Article contributed by Mayah Bell with NNDHS

Did you know?

~ 90% of pharmaceuticals taken by people are excreted through urination. Therefore, our sewer systems contain a heavy dose of drugs. A recent study by the EPA has found fish containing trace amounts of estrogen, cholesterol-lowering drugs, pain relievers, antibiotics, caffeine, and even anti-depressants.



~ If you have a leaky faucet that drips once per second, you'll waste over **5 gallons** of water in a day! Fix that leak!

Upcoming Events



November 2: GO VOTE!

November 8: Level 2 Day Time Electrical and HVAC starts.

November 10: EPA-608 one-day course with exam, 8am-4pm

November 11: Veteran's Day — **SCHOOL IS OPEN!**

November 24-26: Thanksgiving Break—HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

December 8: EPA-608 one-day course with exam, 8am-4pm

December 13: Level 3 Day Time Electrical and HVAC starts.

December 20– Jan 2: Christmas Break

January 3: Building/Property Maintenance starts.

January 12: EPA-608 one-day course with exam, 8am-4pm

January 24: Level 4 Day Time Electrical and HVAC starts.

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."

~Charles Darwin

Virginia Technical Academy was founded on the principle that every community needs a skilled and well-educated workforce. Our goal is to provide an environment that will exceed the educational requirements and needs of both future tradespeople and their employers.

MISSION STATEMENT

Virginia Technical Academy is dedicated to keeping our trades strong through education, validation, and professional

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**VIRGINIA TECHNICAL
ACADEMY**

757-586-5322 • LEARN. APPLY. THRIVE.

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