NEW RIVER CTC LAUNCHES WEATHERIZATION TRAINING PROJECT

[BECKLEY, WV] New River Community and Technical College is participating in a massive effort by the U.S. Department of Energy to weatherize older homes to reduce energy consumption. New River’s Office of Workforce Education sponsored a “train the trainer” workshop in Beckley, WV, in September for housing experts from across the state to learn advanced energy conservation techniques that employ green technologies to weatherize homes.

“The federal government is investing around $5 billion in weatherization efforts this year, as opposed to about $229 million last year,” explained William J. Loope, New River’s vice president of workforce education. “We need a skilled workforce to complete this work, and the demand is overwhelming.”

Loope said that program calls for 1.4 million homes to be weatherized this year, more than 3,000 of them in West Virginia. The people who attended the New River training represented community action agencies, community colleges, building contractors and private employers. They will now go back to their agencies and train weatherization technicians who will complete this work.
Another aspect of the project is to educate builders and contractors in the same technologies so that new construction will meet Department of Energy guidelines and not need to be retrofitted down the road, Loope said.

The next steps for New River include development of an associate's degree program in weatherization technology and training in lead paint identification and abatement, solar panel technology that will make solar energy affordable for the average homeowner.

“Green technology leading to good jobs for West Virginians will be a major focus of New River in the coming years,” Loope said.

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