



Duke Energy Powers CareerSource CLM Career Awareness Project

By Laura Byrnes



Kudos to the Duke Energy Foundation for helping power career awareness in Citrus, Levy and Marion counties.

Among the myriad ways Duke gives back to the communities it serves is this: a \$21,000 grant to support our Career Awareness and Talent Pipeline project.

If you read this column regularly, you are no doubt familiar with the earlier phase of the initiative which focuses on the area's high-demand industries. The videos are a way to educate students, parents and school staff about the many career opportunities available right here in our three-county region.

We will continue to build the library of videos showcasing the manufacturing, IT, healthcare and logistics industries. But we are also excited to launch the next phase of the project highlighting public school programs that prepare students for careers in those industries.

Dorothy Pernu, Duke Energy government and community relations manager, said the project is in line with the company's "commitment to addressing the needs vital to healthy communities. Supporting quality educational and workforce initiatives from kindergarten through career ... are a critical focus of our organization."

Pernu said Duke joins CareerSource CLM in recognizing that "training initiatives increase the pool of diverse talent (that) helps businesses and industries respond to changing needs."

And one way students can learn about careers and training is through expansion of the video project to training available in the

region's public schools, she said during CareerSource CLM's recent quarterly board meeting.

"It's Duke Energy's pleasure to support and partner with you on expansion of this project," Pernu said as she presented the check to CareerSource CLM's Board Chair Kathy Judkins.

Echoing Pernu's sentiments, Judkins noted that, "nothing is more important for our future workforce than developing an understanding by parents and students of the opportunities for good careers with businesses located right here in our communities."

Judkins, who is SECO Energy's deputy director for civic, charitable and government affairs, was joined by representatives from Marion and Levy counties school districts. The Citrus County School District will also take part in the project but was unable to attend.

The project was piloted in Marion County last year and focused on the manufacturing industry. The videos, which are professionally produced by Digital Fury in Ocala, are shown to students, educators and parents throughout the region's schools, at youth career expos and job fairs, and at other venues. They are also promoted via CareerSource CLM's social media.

Participants also get a copy of the videos for their company's own use. During the board meeting, Judkins presented recognition plaques to those in attendance whose companies are participating in the program.

Businesses that have had videos produced or are scheduled for production include:

B-Scada, CHAMPS Software Inc., Duke Energy and Stevenson Dental Technology, all of Citrus County.

A&N and Paradox Intellectual Properties, both based in Levy County.

And in Marion County, American Panel, Artemis Plastics, Capris Furniture, Cardinal Glass, ClosetMaid, Conimar, Country Meats, Dimension Works, EurekaZone, GML Industries, Hale Products, McCall Communications, Ocala Tractor, Phoenix Wood, ProPoly, R+L Global Logistics, Scorpion Racing Products, SECO Energy, Simar Industries, SPX Flow, TJM Promos and WINCO Manufacturing.

Career Awareness-Talent Pipeline videos may be viewed on CareerSource CLM's Facebook video page and YouTube playlist.

If you would like to learn more about the initiative, please give a call at 352-873-7955 or 800-746-9950.

