

Fauquier Trades Center

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Transcript

Janet Michael

If you've always wanted to get into broadcasting but didn't know how, you're not alone. It's a tricky business to break into. Our station is partnering with the broadcasters and Sportscasters Mentoring Group to provide on air broadcast training to a select few to learn more, go now and grab your free report at getintobroadcasting.com. That's get. Into broadcasting.com to discover how you can be mentored by a broadcaster from this station. Hello and welcome to the valley. Today I am your host, Janet Michael. It is Laurel Ridge Community College Day. So it must be the second Thursday of the month, although Guy Curtis, you and I were going back and forth in e-mail. You had a calendar. Blip in your brain because when we were working on scheduling the recording for today's show, you're like, wait, I think I have another week. I'm like, no, you don't. For the first Thursday was early this month.

Guy Curtis

That first Thursday of the month is always tricky when it lands on the the week before, and so just planning for my week and I was like, wait a minute, I'm behind so thankfully. Your organizational skills as have kept me on track and kept their show on schedule. Thank you for. Having us today.

Janet Michael

I'm pretty excited because we're talking about a whole new building that isn't something you get to talk about very often when it comes to community colleges and continuing education. So I'm excited to syare the details about the fall Care Trade Center. I assume it's goanna be opening in the next few months.

Guy Curtis

Yes, we're very close to opening the doors of our Fauquier Trade Center at the Fauquier Campus, which is very exciting news. Many of our trades programs that we've developed over the last several years at our Vint Hill location are moving to our home or back to home, if you will, at the Fauquier location in Warrenton. We're very excited about the property that is being developed. We were gifted over 60 acres adjacent to that campus by the local lower registrational foundation in the Falkirk. County partnership. That was. There and through a number of initiatives and efforts to bring those programs home, we finally have a facility that will accommodate our growth in that area of the trade. Skilled trades area, specifically of HVAC, plumbing, electrical, welding that's going to be a new program there and of course our huge growth in our heavy equipment operator program. So we're very excited about this. And building opening and being able to bring programs to home, hopefully as early as August. So there's some construction delays that are occurring right now as. With most big projects, but we're very excited to bring these programs back home to our campus, right, Warrenton.

Janet Michael

I would imagine a lot of people that live in and around Fauquier County are pretty excited too, because until this building opens, they've had to travel to Venn Hill or to Middletown, in some cases to take a lot of these classes and participate in these programs.

Guy Curtis

There's going to be some partnership opportunities with local school divisions. There's other businesses that are very excited too. So there are folks don't have to travel as far, and it's very conveniently located right there off of Route 17, right in Warrenton. If you're driving to Northern Virginia for some of your work and and driving back into the fall cure market, that's going to be very convenient to get the class and get there on time. Your long days, so many of those tradesmen that are probably going to be. Bold to this new program area and new location, it's going to be a great benefit to them, but certainly the businesses in the region and also the partnerships that are going to be coming in the future too.

Janet Michael

On the screen with us today, we've got Anna Teeter. She is a program manager for Workforce Solutions. Joining her is Donna Comer. Donna is also a program manager, but we were joking before we started recording Donna when I was asking about your title and how I should introduce you, Guy says you are a hybrid type of employee. How do you fit into the giant cog? Of Laurel Ridge community.

Donna Comer

I am a hybrid employee. My position is duly funded between Laurel Ridge Community College and Workforce Solutions and Fauquier County Economic Development Department. So I serve as the workforce coordinator, and while wearing that hat, I on a day-to-day basis, I'm out engaged with as many. Help your county employers as I can just trying to understand their workforce needs and ways in which the county and or the school can partner to help them.

Janet Michael

Having you in that dual role is pretty valuable to both workforce development as well as workforce solutions because you're getting to see both sides. So you know what programs employers need to have training for in the area and at the same time, you're able to help develop. Those programs on the other side to meet those needs.

Donna Comer

Oh, absolutely. My position was actually created, I think back in 2016 or 2017, someone had it before myself and several programs have been a result of this partnership just having someone. With eyes wide. Open and ears low to the ground, listening to what the. Businesses in Fauquier County needs, so it is definitely. Really a valuable partnership.

Janet Michael

And then tell me a little bit about some of the programs that are going to be offered in the new fall Cure Trade Center.

Anna Teter

So it's interesting because my position, I'm actually the Allied health care programmer as well as welding, but I've had all of those programs all along. The beauty of my role as a program manager is that we get to hire the experts. So at the end of the day, we're leaning on those instructors who have, in many cases, 10 plus years of field experience, poor guidance in these programs. So ultimately we can program whatever content area we need to, but I've had welding now for about 7 years as we're expanding to this new market. I've been working alongside of Donna Comer to develop that welding class and to expand those opportunities in that market.

Janet Michael

Welding is one of those things that I think is underrated as a career choice because so many of us don't even realize how many things we're using in our day-to-day lives that are welded and at the same time, a lot of these larger industries need that on a much grander scale.

Anna Teter

So welding again is a very interesting choice. As far as a career, you can take it wherever you want to take it. If you want to stand in a booth for 12 hours a day and weld, you can do that. If you want to hang off a bridge someday, you can do that. You can do anything in between. We also see a lot of DIY wires as well, so sometimes they need to fix their own farm equipment. Or we've heard of different people that have just picked up a machine and want to try and figure out how to use it. So we've seen the full scope. From that DIY or to those who really want to pursue that as a career path. So it's a great opportunity to really get your hands wet in it, so to speak, and try it out and really develop those skills.

Janet Michael

Most of the programs that you offer in the trades are similar to that in that it can be somebody who wants to better their skill set. It can be somebody who's decided to make a complete career change and they want to try something completely new to someone who just wants to have that skill set because they have a project or a hobby or something that they want to do. That's the beauty of the trades in general is that you can come in at any level and leave at a higher one than you started.

Anna Teter

And it's a great way to even test the waters, to see if you even like it so some people get into whichever area that we wanna talk about and get into it. And like, oh, I don't not wanna do this. And then there's others that are like they'll start out with maybe an intro class. And they're like, wow, I love this. I'm gonna continue on with this. I can really see where this could go. So there's just so many different opportunities to test out those waters to figure out what direction to go with a career.

Janet Michael

Donna, do you find that? Some of the employers are looking for more seasoned employees that are in their 30s or 40s with some work experience. Or are they also all in on kids right out of high school where kids in their 20s that thought they were gonna do one career and now have decided to make a?

Donna Comer

They are all in, obviously, if a seasoned employee candidate walk through their door, they would be doing the happy dance and love it. But most of the employers in Fauquier County are 100% all in over

the last four or five years. Now, we've actually partnered with some of the area high schools. And we've offered some high school cohort classes and our heavy equipment operator program. Fully supported by the employers come out, interview them, hire them. We have several success stories we could showcase that partnership and that that community devotion, if you will, to support the skilled trades and supporting learn that springboard effort, learning just understanding that everyone has to start. Likewise, people in our other trades programs are plumbing, electrical, HVAC program. Often if you just get into that level one class and show your dedication and show your interest in that field, an employer is gonna tag. You up and. Kind of link arms with you and take you the rest of the way. There's a true commitment, if you will, to educating the next generation in the trades area.

Janet Michael

One of the things that I have always appreciated too about workforce solutions in particular is that while so many of us, I think think that ohh once you learn how to be a. Summer, nothing really changes and it's the same thing from year one to year 15 or 20, but that is not the case anymore with technology for any of these skilled trades, there's always a level up or something new that's being introduced that even existing plumbers and and HVAC technicians. Need to learn in order to stay on top of their game?

Donna Comer

The name of our unit is Workforce Solutions and continuing education, right professionally. You're going to learn something new every single day, and no day is the same problem. I, even with Anna, already talked about our instructors, their industry experts. There's the subject matter experts they are. In it and surround it by whatever their field is all day long, and even those. Guys are learning new things every day and the beauty of them being our instructors is they're able to share that knowledge and that experience with their classes and showcase that to be a plumber or to be an H back tech or electrician you have to approach it with a little bit of a an open mind just because this is what happened and this is what you learned. On Monday doesn't mean that Tuesday it's gonna be the exact same way you. Might have to troubleshoot. And rope in your critical. Thinking skills and figure things out.

Janet Michael

Yeah, I think sometimes that gets overlooked. Is the problem solving that goes on. It's not always $1 + 2 = 3$, sometimes it's $1 + 2 = 3 \frac{1}{4}$ and you gotta figure out where that quarter comes from. Let's take a break when we come back, can we get in the weeds a little bit on the demand for those particular jobs in our area? Because I don't think we can talk about that. Enough guy and I try to weave it in to most every one of our conversations. But even still all the time I'm hearing people, why I didn't know. So can we talk about that a little bit when we come back? Guy Curtis is on the screen with us. He is director of marketing for Laurel Ridge Community College, joining us for the conversation today as well is Anna Teeter and Donna Comer. They are program managers for Laurel Ridge Community College Workforce solutions. We're going to talk about needs, demands of the trades and a little bit more about the full year Trade Center when we come back. In just a couple of minutes.

Speaker 5

Hi, I'm McKenna, a senior at Mountain Vista Governor School, together with environmental nonprofit sustainability matters. We're rebranding recycling. Why do some bottle caps say leave me on to recycle? Well, small pieces like loose bottle lids can get stuck in recycling machines, forcing the whole process to

breakdown. A good rule of thumb is don't recycle anything smaller than a credit card. Some localities ask you to take the bottle lid off and throw them in the trash, while others ask you to leave them on the bottle so they don't jam the machines. For more on how we're rebranding recycling, look for #rebranding recycling on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, or visit Sustainability Matters dot Earth.

Janet Michael

Welcome back to the valley. Today I am your host, Janet Michael. It is Laurel Ridge Community College today and today. It's all about the bulkier Trade Center set to open. We're keeping all of our fingers crossed in late summer, hopefully by the end of August. Guy Curtis is here with me on the screen. He is director of marketing for Laurel Ridge Community College. Joining us is Anna Tater and Donna Comer. They are both program managers with workforce solutions. And I wanna talk Anna for a minute about the new center, the fall Care Trade Center, because as a guy touched on early in our conversation, it's a big deal to have this building now in Fauquier County, I can see the number 8000 square feet, but I can't imagine in my head just how big is that. But I'm guessing if you're running heavy equipment and welding and electrical and plumbing and HVAC, it's got to be a pretty big building with enough room to accommodate all of those programs.

Anna Teter

It really is, and it's such a beautiful location too. It's up on a little bit of a hill and it's surrounded by these old trees that are just tall and glorious. It's just such a stunning setting for this, but this building is really focused specifically on these trades. So as you go into each room, we'll have trainers set up. That we've been using for a while for each of the occupations. And then like we had talked about earlier, we're adding that welding facility that has 11 new booths in it that we've never been able to offer before. The space is actually big enough that we're going to tuck in some classroom tables into it as well, so that there is both the theory side as well as the practical side. We've got an ironworker coming saws. Coming brand new welding machines, then the electrical room and HVAC room, we're able to bring over all of our equipment from Vent Hill and all of that will finally have a space. And the great thing is that students are going to be able to have more space to be able to work on those practical trainers and machines to do what they. Needed to do.

Janet Michael

As I understand it, you've had modules, so in my brain I'm picturing what these extra classrooms used to look like outside of elementary schools. I can't imagine how great it's going to be now to have a space that is customized specifically for what you need instead of having this tiny little building that you gotta make work, even though it's not ideal.

Anna Teter

Yeah, this is just such a huge deal for us to be able to have that space set for our equipment and for our students to do what they need to do. Finally, it's going to really take our programs to that next level and really give it the value just by having a home for it that it really has needed to have for a really long. Time gone up.

Janet Michael

All of these programs we've talked about this in the past as well are in high demand. All of the industries in, throughout the Shenandoah Valley quite frankly are in need of workers that have this skill set.

Donna Comer

They really are, as you just said, they're in demand everywhere. But just since we're talking about the Fauquier Trade Center, construction is the largest industry sector of employers in Fauquier County. Behind it is education and government. So construction is first. It's the biggest then. Logistics and warehousing are the fastest growing in this area, so our trades programs will serve as a really good support system to help kill individuals. For those jobs. Jobs also, it should be noted that a whopping 27,000 people commute out of Fauquier County every day. We offset that we have about 15,000 in commuters, but again having the center here and having the state-of-the-art equipment that. Anna has already referenced that we can skill all of these individuals will help, maybe keep some of the 27. Maybe they can find work right here in their backyard. Maybe they can stay in Fauquier County, which of course, my friends at the Economic Development Office really like that because. When we work here, we play here and we do all kinds of other things here that will. That's good and healthy for the county. And Speaking of demand, just to give you an idea, in the town of Warrenton, I searched the town of Warrenton only, which is the county seat if. You will for. Here there are 899 annual job openings for electricians, just electricians, islands or to electricians and the median salary for an electrician is 61,000 a year. So these are really good paying jobs. The jobs are plentiful. And as I said, they're right here in Fauquier County. So having this building and these programs and a permanent home, as Anna said, a beautiful home, one that people can be very proud to be attending, classes in will be helpful to the overall job market. It economy, the health of our community.

Janet Michael

I think sometimes we grossly underestimate how much people hate the commute. They do it because they feel like they have to, but to be able to have those opportunities right there in their backyard and commute 1015 minutes as opposed to an hour and a half is a crazy great benefit to be able to offer. Any employee that's looking to to find a job within Fauquier County or some of the closer surrounding counties, not DC, Northern Virginia, that sort of.

Donna Comer

Oh, absolutely. And of the 27,000 people that I referenced earlier, most of them are commuting out to Fairfax County. If anyone has ever driven on 29 N to 66 and to Fairfax County may be on paper, it's 20 miles, but it's going to take you way longer than 20 minutes. To not be able. To commute is certainly a wonderful.

Janet Michael

I did a show earlier this week with Northwestern Community Services Board. We have a monthly series called Rooted in Wellness and this month's topic was occupational Wellness and finding work life balance. So in addition. To the time that you're losing sitting in traffic, the stress that you're getting from sitting in traffic. Thinking about all the things you could be doing while you're just sitting there has an impact on your work life balance, so it has a mental a good mental impact. If you can work locally. As well indeed it. Does you have a trades information session that's coming up in July? Tell me what people can expect who should be coming.

Guy Curtis

Well, if you have any kind of thoughts and ideas of possibly getting into the trades programs, we would love to have you at our July 13th trades Fast Track program information session here to allow folks just to come open House style, view the new facility. We hopefully will be open and have occupancy by then, but if not, you can come and learn more about the programs Don and the team and myself and others will be there. We talk more about those programs and the facility itself and the training opportunities, but also the funding that comes along with them too. That's one thing we always talked about, Jan. Just all the funding programs that we have around those high demand programs that we're offering because Virginia is trying to incentivize folks to get into them. So definitely join us at the open house to learn more about those skilled trades programs the facility come meet some of the program staff that are responsible and Don and I are telling us some ideas. I think we might offer some free food so. If anything come out for the free food and refreshments to see the space. Certainly this is just a soft little opening information session and likely we'll be inviting the community at some point to a grand opening official ribbon coming out of the space. So many partners have been involved to make this space possible. And so we're excited for the opportunity on July 13th for that open house from 3:30 to 6:30 at the fall here, campus Walker Trade Center.

Janet Michael

That would be a great opportunity for parents to bring their junior or Senior High School students or their kid that's taking the year off between graduation and college, or a job or whatever it is they're gonna do to come out and just get a hands-on Birds Eye view of the opportunities that are available. Much like what Anna said, C there may be something that. They have ruled out in the past. Asked that now that they see how it works or thinking. Wait, that's not what I thought it was. Maybe I wanna do this now.

Guy Curtis

You did it exactly perfect, Janet. There's been many folks who do that same thing. Parents, influencers, some community members who actually represent folks in the community who may be looking at new careers or starting new jobs. And so yeah, it's definitely an opportunity to just explore, learn more about the programs that are offered. It's very informal and a sense of. Just come when you can. During that time frame, it is an information session that's geared really just an open house style from 3:30 to 6:30 on July 13th. Just come out and see the space and it's your opportunity to talk to staff and even talk to some of our instructors too who have that industry experience and can give some of that advice of how to get started in that career path and what's it like to them and. How it's rewarding and what's the benefits and the pros and cons? So it's a great way to. The first hand experience of what the space looks like and what the expectations are as a student, but also talk to those real world experienced individuals.

Janet Michael

Do they have to register for the info session or can they just show? Up and is. There more information about it on your website.

Guy Curtis

We do encourage pre registration, but it's not required. So if you visit lowerridgeworkforce.com and search keywords, trades information sessions. Or just go to the website and look up our trades programs. You'll find more details about that set session and registering advances. Ideal so we can anticipate numbers, but you can come on announce too and we'll accommodate you as you show up. It's a great opportunity to see the space, but I'll. Also, learn more about the programs.

Janet Michael

And you've been trying forever to get me behind the wheel of the crane or some heavy equipment. Maybe this will finally be the.

Speaker

I'll tell you.

Guy Curtis

What if you're in Middletown on August 19th? Come by on that Saturday. We'll put you behind one of the simulator. Can check it out.

Janet Michael

You see, that makes it even easier.

Guy Curtis

So we do offer.

Janet Michael

Yeah, it's just down the street.

Guy Curtis

Yeah, exactly your. Opportunity, mainly good social moment too, for you, for social media wise, let's get you on. There and pick a couple of photos.

Janet Michael

Anna, Donna, thank you both for joining guide today and giving me all this great information. Excited to see how. The new building looks and I'm really excited to see everyone that's going to be able to. Take advantage of it.

Anna Teter

Thank you so much for.

Janet Michael

Having US Guy Curtis, I will see you back here on the screen. Maybe we'll do in person or something for the July show.

Guy Curtis

That sounds like a plan.

Janet Michael

I will be back tomorrow. It is strolling Strasburg with Olivia Hilton from the town of Strasburg. Ironically enough, as I'm sitting here on a Wednesday morning recording guy Curtis, as soon as I'm done, I'm heading to Strasburg to stroll so that you'll be able to hear the show tomorrow that I recorded today. It's two days before you're actually gonna be able to hear it, and you can't keep up with the 2nd Thursday. You see what? I got going on in my in. My brain guy Curtis.

Guy Curtis

I can't imagine.

Janet Michael

Meet me back here for that. Just a few minutes after noon.