August 26, 2014

Duke Energy awards more than $180,000 to Durham Tech for equipment to train students in advanced manufacturing

(DURHAM, NC) – Duke Energy has announced a grant of $182,299 for a Simulated Work Environment proposal submitted by Durham Technical Community College.

The funds will be used to purchase eight mechatronic training systems modules. Mechatronics is a process that combines elements of electrical, mechanical, telecommunications, control, and computer engineering to improve and/or optimize the functionality of product design and manufacturing.

“We currently offer both curriculum and noncurriculum programs in advanced manufacturing skills,” said Dr. Bill Ingram, president of Durham Tech. “The missing piece was having an on-campus, hands-on environment where our students could apply the capabilities they are learning in class. These training modules will enable us to establish a new degree in mechatronics, which will help our students gain the expertise needed to make them appealing to a wide range of potential employers.”

Durham Tech has a long history of developing new programs to train students to meet the changing needs of industry. This latest program will help new students acquire work-ready skills, as well as allow existing automotive workers to upgrade their skills so they are fully prepared for careers in advanced manufacturing. The equipment and training site will be located at Durham Tech’s Northern Durham Campus, which is near Treyburn Industrial Park, home to employers such as Merck, AW North Carolina, and Purdue Pharmaceuticals.

“Our partnership with Durham Tech develops a highly skilled workforce that will attract and retain businesses in the region for years to come,” said Paul Newton, Duke Energy’s state president – North Carolina.

This grant is part of Duke Energy’s $30 million investment in North Carolina community colleges in support of technical education that helps recruit new and retain existing industries in North Carolina. Durham Tech received two grants from Duke Energy in 2010 that provided equipment to establish a Facilities and Critical Support Systems Maintenance Training program and initiate development of a Sustainability Technologies program.

Individual community colleges can apply for funds through the Foundation for the Carolinas (Duke Energy Carolinas customers) or NC Community Foundation (Duke Energy Progress customers). Applications are reviewed by a committee of representatives from Duke Energy, the NC Community College System, and NC Department of Commerce.

Duke Energy Foundation makes charitable investments on behalf of Duke Energy, the largest electric power holding company in the United States with 7.2 million customers in six states. Over the foundation’s long history in local communities, it has identified focus areas that maximize the foundation’s dollars and guide the foundation’s giving. The foundation makes grants supporting the environment, economic development, education, and