

# New Welding Program Lab Will Help Train Lehigh Valley's Skilled Workforce

By Kat Schneider

**NORTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP** - The Lehigh Career and Technical Institute (LCTI) unveiled its state-of-the-art \$4.25 million welding program lab on Feb. 5 at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the North Whitehall Township campus.



The 12,000 square-foot facility, which is nearly twice the size of LCTI's old program lab, will provide hands-on training for Lehigh Valley's students and provide a pipeline of talented workers for the region's employers.

"America still makes things," Don Cunningham, President and CEO of Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC), said at the groundbreaking ceremony. "Lehigh Valley hosts companies that make things and there's great skilled work in manufacturing, welding, and technology in the Lehigh Valley."

The Lehigh Valley is the 50th largest manufacturing sector in the United States, Cunningham said. Manufacturing accounts for \$7.8 billion of the region's \$41.2 billion GDP, and the region is currently home to about 700 manufacturers.

Dubbed the Welding Technology Center, the new LCTI facility offers 40 welding booths and 10 workstations. With 11 more welding booths than the old facility, the new center's capacity

means 50 students can weld simultaneously.

"Our students will now be able to develop skills in what is the premier education facility, not only in Pennsylvania, but we believe across the country," said Dr. Thomas Rushton, Executive Director at LCTI.

Not all manufacturing jobs include welding, Cunningham said, but the demand for more welders exists. Through retirements and transfers, there will be a need for 275 more welders in the next year.

This gap is also felt industry-wide, with the need for 375,000 additional welders by 2023, Moran said. Facilities like LCTI's Welding Technology Center make it possible to close the gap.

"This project will be able to deliver welders to our economy at such a high skill level that is critical to the whole ecosystem of the Lehigh Valley," Cunningham said.

A \$50,000 Pennsylvania Department of Education offset the cost of the center, which also offers training with automated welding technologies.

*Continued on page 15*

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## Faith Christian School Seniors Honored

By Michael Ortoski

FORKS TWSP. - Faith Christian School at their home basketball games against Summit Christian Academy honored their seniors.

Athletes who were honored were: Mackenzie Chamberlain, Emma Holt, Mercedes Long, Cameron Whistler, Connor Brawley, David Magnin and Team Statistician: Zach Erwin. Both the Girls and Boys Varsity teams won!

Faith Christian School, K-12 grades, serves the Christian communities of the Pocono Mountains, Slate Belt, eastern New Jersey, and the Lehigh Valley areas. Children from eight school districts and over 50 churches comprise the diverse and outstanding student body. Most public school districts provide transportation to our school facility located one mile north of Bangor and eight miles south of Stroudsburg, off Route 191 in Roseto, Pa. Please call our office, 610-588-3414, to set up a time to visit. We look forward to meeting you soon at the corner of Dante Street and Liberty Avenue in Roseto, Pa.



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