



188 Main Street ❖ Greenville, PA 16125 ❖ Phone: 724-588-3000

For immediate release

"SKILLUP: CAREERS IN CONSTRUCTION" AWARDS LAPTOP

New Castle, Pa. – June 18, 2009 - A laptop computer has been awarded to a Laurel High School student as a result of her interest in a career in the building trades. The Dell computer was awarded Thursday to Tiffany Rice, a sophomore this fall at Laurel.

“SkillUp: Careers in Construction,” a project to promote interest in the building trades, is administered by Northwest PA Cooperation Council, a regional labor-management non-profit based in Greenville. Careers in any one of 17 building trades is offered as an alternative to earning a living with a college degree, according to Drew Dershimer, NwPACC’s project manager of SkillUp.

College may not be for every young person, Dershimer notes. The numbers of those who fail to get a degree or even to finish in the first four or five years beyond high school is getting higher, he added.

As an alternative, SkillUp promotes a different type of career, reports Sam Shilling, business manager of Carpenters Local No. 268 and President of Mercer County Building Trades. Shilling’s carpenters are one of 17 building trades looking for union apprenticeship candidates due to retirements and an aging work force.

“In a union apprenticeship, we pay for your education, you get paid for on-the-job training and card-carrying graduates of our programs can go anywhere in the world and work,” Shilling said.

The 17 trades, several contractors, PA Department of Labor and Industry, the Mercer-Lawrence counties’ Workforce Investment Board and Mercer County Career Center are among the partners and sponsors of the program. SkillUp counselors exhibited at career fairs and in classrooms in Crawford, Lawrence, Mercer and Venango counties.



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Nearly 3000 students have shown interest in such a post-scholastic career to date, according to Dershimer. Rice's name was pulled from a random drawing. Tiffany said she's never won anything this big before. She has a desktop computer, but is excited to add a laptop to her use.



Laptop Presentation

(Pictured from left to right) SkillUp project manager Drew Dershimer, laptop winner Tiffany Rice, West Central Job Partnership Workforce Development manager Rebecca Moder, and Laurel High School Guidance Counselor Michele McClelland.

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