



Gov. Pritzker Announces \$15M Investment to Create Two State of the Art Manufacturing Training Academies Downstate

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Funding from Bipartisan Rebuild Illinois Capital Plan Will Establish Two New, Cutting Edge Training Academies to Prepare Illinoisans for Future Jobs and Boost Investment in Downstate Communities

NORMAL – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), joined by Heartland Community College and Rivian, today announced an investment to build two advanced manufacturing training academies to expand training for high-demand manufacturing jobs in Illinois. A \$15 million capital investment through the Governor’s bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan will establish two downstate manufacturing training academies that will provide hundreds of Illinois residents the opportunity to develop specialized skills for a career in advanced manufacturing.

“Today, I’m proud to announce the winning projects that will launch two cutting edge new programs here in Illinois, which will begin enrolling students later this year,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “This capital investment – spurred by our historic Rebuild Illinois capital program – builds on the funding that Rebuild already devotes to upgrading and expanding facilities at Illinois community colleges, cementing their key role in continuing to train our young workforce, and lifelong learners keeping their skills fresh. Today is just one indicator of the job and skills growth our state is seeing. Workforce investments like those we’re announcing here foreshadow even more good jobs we can fill in the future.”

The new training facilities will be established at Heartland Community College (HCC) in Normal, and Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) in Metro East. State funds will be met with \$4.95 million in matching commitments for capital projects, as well as additional support from employers and regional partners to establish new training academies.

“Today’s announcement delivers on a key commitment made under Governor Pritzker’s 5-year economic plan, which calls for investments in downstate communities to prepare our next generation of workers with a pathway to well-paying jobs of the future,” **said Sylvia Garcia, Acting Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity**. “As the electric vehicle industry and other advanced manufacturing roles see increasing demand – in Illinois, we are preparing to seize those jobs, with investments made across our communities and to maintain our state as a top destination for companies to grow and invest.”

Programs are expected to launch later this year, enrolling hundreds of students in the first year of the program. While each program will have a different focus, both will help meet the demand for state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing training downstate, preparing Illinoisans to seize on advanced careers in the manufacturing sector in the years ahead.

“Community Colleges play an essential role in providing affordable and equitable access to education, and in turn, a pathway to sustainable careers. And partnership is key to building and maintaining the workforce needed to fulfil the promise of innovation in technical education and to grow the economy,” **said Heartland Community College President Keith Cornille**. “Working with the DECO and Rivian, and our other regional manufacturing partners, we gain key pieces in providing a pathway to a sustainable career for students both coming right out of High School and also those who look to re-enter the workforce. With the new Electric Vehicle-Energy Storage Manufacturing Training Academy, Heartland Community College will be a hub for innovation, and a resource for those looking for upskilling in a wide variety of occupations.”

At Heartland, a \$7.5 million grant from the State will enable the development of the new Electric Vehicle-Energy Storage Manufacturing Training Academy (EVES). This first-of-its-kind EV manufacturing training program is made possible by a partnership with electric vehicle manufacturer, Rivian, which is expected to create an additional 1,600 jobs in the next two years alone. Matching state funds with a \$1.5 million private employer commitment, HCC will develop a new auto shop used exclusively for training for EV manufacturing. This program will help meet growing needs of the region and will prepare Illinois to seize on the rapid growth of the EV industry, with Illinois jobs expected to double by 2024.

“Rivian is honored to have supported the leadership of Governor Pritzker in establishing the Electric Vehicle-Energy Storage Manufacturing Training Academy,” **said James Chen, Vice President of Public Policy and Chief Regulatory Counsel for Rivian.** “This project will help prepare local workers for the well-paid, technical jobs that the clean energy transition requires. This project also reflects Rivian’s core values of community empowerment, innovation, and a strong foundation for the continued growth and success of the electric vehicle industry. We thank Governor Pritzker, the Illinois DCEO, and Heartland Community College for making this academy a reality.”

At SWIC, a second \$7.5 million grant will create a new manufacturing education hub in Belleville – expanding upon the school’s successful manufacturing training facilities. The Advanced Manufacturing Center will break ground in 2021 and will welcome students into its new facilities by fall 2022. The project will be completed in two phases: with the first creating a new precision machining pathway; and the second aiming to expand career training for roles in industrial electricity and welding manufacturing. Construction on a new 31,100 SF lab space complete will provide new computers and other specialized equipment. This new program will also prioritize helping to address equity gaps in the region – with SWIC creating a new diverse recruitment program to help ensure more minority and women students can participate in newly created training.

“One of Southwestern Illinois College’s primary goals is to train students for well-paying, highly skilled, in-demand career fields, and the construction of a manufacturing training academy will bolster these efforts,” **said SWIC President Nick Mance.** “In light of the unemployment rate and economic distress in the area, it is more crucial than ever that students embark on a viable career pathway that leads directly to steady employment paying a living wage or better.”

“Manufacturing remains an important and growing industry for our state, and we are poised, with the right investments, to ensure more Illinoisans get the opportunities they need to train for these 21st century jobs,” **said Brian Durham, Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).** “These training academies will

address a skills shortage in the manufacturing industry and adopt new technologies in manufacturing production while meeting the needs of many regional employers, located in these downstate communities.”

“This grant is a natural fit for Heartland Community College and will enhance every aspect of manufacturing training and education for students! The proximity of Heartland and Rivian Motors will be a strong connection for the technology needs for Students and this funding will be a great foundation of investment,” **said Deputy Republican Leader Dan Brady**. “Thank you, Governor Pritzker, Heartland President Keith Cornille, and trustees. I am pleased to have played a part in this education, and jobs training investment!”

“This is an important grant that will help this program to train people to be successful in high tech careers with employers such as Rivian,” **said State Senator Jason Barickman (R-Bloomington)**. “It’s good to see the state step up to help keep our workforce ready for a changing and ever-competitive global economy.”

Since taking office, Governor Pritzker has prioritized making investments in the manufacturing industry that will create jobs, advance access to training, and maintain Illinois as a top destination for manufacturing growth and innovation. This includes the creation of the apprenticeship tax credit to further establish and build out the pipeline of skilled talent of advanced manufacturers in our state to help prepare Illinois to seize the new jobs created by this growing industry in the years ahead. Additionally, the Governor’s pledge to make Illinois a clean energy state by 2050 is predicted to increase jobs in the EV sector.

For more information on the two Manufacturing Training Academies programs, please visit [DCEO’s website](#).