

Gov. Pritzker Announces Opening Of South Central Illinois Training & Innovation Center

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LITCHFIELD – Governor JB Pritzker joined local and state leaders today to announce the grand opening of the South Central Illinois (SCI) Training & Innovation Center – bolstered by \$8.6 million in grant funding from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). The regional training center will provide career and technical training for school districts in Montgomery and Macoupin counties.

“It's an exciting time for jobs and economic growth across Downstate Illinois and for the first time, students here in South-Central Illinois will have access to 21st century career paths that can begin upon high school graduation,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “These are the types of strategic investments that build our workers’ skills to take the jobs available right now in high growth industries of the future. And most importantly, this puts Illinois at the forefront of economic progress in the nation.”

“The South Central Illinois Training & Innovation Center is a prime example of how we are investing in the partnerships that uplift Illinoisans with the tools to succeed,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. “Our administration is committed to continuing our work supporting the working families that drive our state forward, providing opportunities to gain the skills needed to secure good-paying jobs, and expanding pathways for the workers of tomorrow so they may take us even further.”

The Center will offer training to both high school students as well as displaced workers located in the region. In partnership with Lincoln Land Community College & Lewis and Clark Community College, students will have the opportunity to earn college credits and industry credentials while still in high school – helping them meet the needs of regional workforce demands while preparing them for postsecondary success.

“Investing in our workforce is an investment in Illinois' success and this first-of-its-kind training and innovation center will greatly expand opportunities in Montgomery and Macoupin Counties,” said DCEO Director Kristin Richards. “Giving students and displaced workers the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the trades will prepare them for future success in the workforce while promoting economic development across Illinois.”

The Center will offer training in auto technology, welding, and an Illinois Laborers & Contractor’s apprenticeship program focused on the trades. The redeveloped warehouse will offer state-of-the-art facilities including a full-scale auto garage, welding center, and separate modules different areas within the trades – all designed for hands-on learning.

Located within the City of Litchfield's Industrial Park, the Center will meet the demands of the workforce, including trainings in precision machining, IT certifications, & agriculture technology.

This \$8.6 million investment is part of the state's commitment to supporting and growing Illinois' workforce by providing capital grants for training centers, creating targeted training opportunities, and building pipelines. This includes funding for the

Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship program, capital grants for Advanced Manufacturing Academies, efforts to boost equitable workforce recovery through the Training and Economic Development Program (JTED) program, and more.