



News Release

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and indoor demonstration

WWRC STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES DEMONSTRATE MANUFACTURING SKILLS FOR INDUSTRY LEADERS

Center's manufacturing academy part of new emphasis on certification

(FISHERSVILLE, Va.) — Youth with disabilities participating in a new job skills academy will demonstrate to Virginia manufacturing leaders a solar-powered water filtration unit they built at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center.

The five-day academy is a pilot of WWRC's latest efforts to help its consumers gain experience in the manufacturing skills needed for the new Virginia economy's workforce. On June 2, WWRC and its academy participants will host a tour for members of the Virginia Manufacturers Association, which represents more than 5,000 manufacturers employing an estimated 250,000 workers.

"We at WWRC want to foster interest among young adults who have the ability and an interest in attending a 'hands-on' technical learning experience in the area of modern manufacturing," said Director Rick Sizemore. "This is the first step as we develop a certification program to enable our consumers to master critical, basic competencies required for jobs in the modern manufacturing sector and gain industry-recognized certification of those skills."

The academy begins May 30. About a dozen WWRC consumers will start learning about basic production steps, or process flow, sequential processing steps and the assembly and quality control requirements typical of manufacturing processes. On the second and third day of the academy, the students will construct a temporary water filtration unit to draw and filter groundwater taken from a well and set up a bottling and labeling process.

The academy kicks off WWRC's development of a 20-week job training program the center plans to offer consumers with disabilities who want to learn manufacturing skills and gain certification.

Consumers who complete the training can go on to earn their nationally recognized Manufacturing Technician 1 certification, which provides employers with a uniform, accepted, third-party affirmation of the work skills that a prospective employee has to offer. An MT1 certified technician operates manufacturing machinery, systems and processes.

The VMA projects that over the next decade, there will be about 66,000 job openings in manufacturing, of which some 40,000 will require skilled workers with more than a high school diploma, with the majority requiring an industry credential.

“Our partnership with WWRC will help connect demand-driven workforce solutions with career seekers aspiring to fill advanced technology jobs and help ensure Virginia remains competitive to sustain and grow manufacturing,” said Katherine DeRosear, MSI Partnership Architect, the workforce affiliate of the VMA.

Hear WWRC’s Sizemore and VMA’s DeRosear discuss manufacturing jobs and skills in a VR Workforce [podcast](http://bit.ly/1T2dyFg) (<http://bit.ly/1T2dyFg>). (Transcripts are available.)

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The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, in collaboration with community partners, provides and advocates for resources and services to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families. For more information, visit www.vadars.org or follow DARS on Facebook at www.facebook.com/vadars or Twitter at @vadars.