

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Expands Workforce Training Opportunities for George County Residents

Dedicated to enhancing economic growth, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College's (MGCCC) George County Center launched a brand-new workforce development program with Enviva, the world's leading sustainable biomass producer with operations in the U.S. Southeast. The program will offer training to current and prospective Enviva employees.

On a mission to elevate workforce readiness and career training in Southern Mississippi, 30 Enviva associates attended their first training class at MGCCC's George County Center on March 1, 2022. The 18-week program, supported by Enviva and facilitated by MGCCC, is designed to further enhance safety awareness and preparedness, strengthen practical on-the-job skills, and promote continuous improvement and training for workforce advancement.

"This is a great opportunity for the Lucedale community, and we look forward to a long-lasting partnership with Enviva at our George County Center," said Dr. Mary S. Graham, MGCCC president. "Through this workforce training initiative, these students will be prepared for a career in their hometown with an outstanding company."

Starting this March, Enviva associates at the renewable energy company's brand-new Lucedale wood biomass production plant were offered paid time off to attend training classes twice a week at the MGCCC George County Center on topics related to their occupation, such as heat exchangers and transmitter operations, chain belt tension and alignment, air-operated valves (AOV), hydraulics and pneumatics, and preventative maintenance project training. At the end of the program, all participating associates will earn a certificate of completion.

"Achieving operational excellence at any plant requires more than a system of processes and standards," said Clint Pearce, Enviva Lucedale Plant Manager. "It requires a culture of team back-up, a questioning attitude, and continuous learning where colleagues are motivated to seek greater knowledge about the systems, processes, and potential hazards in and around the workplace."

In partnership with Accelerate MS, the state's lead office for workforce development strategy and coordination, MGCCC will utilize Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) funds to support the customized, advanced technical training necessary to enhance employee productivity at Enviva.

"Successful workforce development happens when we build and nurture collaborative partnerships between Mississippi employers and community colleges, like MGCCC, that so ably serve our state," said Ryan Miller, Executive Director of Accelerate Mississippi. "Employee centered investment is a hallmark of great companies and I'm appreciative that Enviva has shown such a strong commitment to its employees and to George County as a whole."