

# PASADENA THE CITIZEN

## Schools, companies partner in economic development

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Updated: 11.15.08

Schools and companies in the Texas Gulf Coast are collaborating to bring more students to the petrochemical and energy industries.

This past summer, San Jacinto College and Lee College hosted EnergyVenture Camp, a five-day summer camp program where ninth and 10th graders learned about industries and career opportunities.

Debby Treuil, EnergyVenture program director at San Jacinto College, said 100 students from Deer Park, La Porte, Galena Park, Pasadena and Goose Creek school districts attended camps held at the two community colleges this year and that the program will expand to Brazosport College and College of the Mainland next year.

Kim Berry and Autumn Maddox, chemistry teachers with Deer Park Independent School District, taught at camps this year.

The colleges recognized the corporate sponsors that provide scholarships for the students to attend the five-day career orientation camp. The sponsors included: Shell Oil, Bayer, CenterPoint Energy, Dixie Chemical Company, Inc., Dow, DuPont, ExxonMobil, INEOS, Invista, Kaneka Texas Corporation, NRG Texas, The Lubrizol Corporation, Odfjell Terminals (Houston) Inc., Rohm and Haas and Texas Petrochemicals. In addition, funding for scholarships was received from the Lee College Foundation and the Construction Maintenance Education Foundation.

Treuil said most camps seem to target A-plus students who typically pursue four-year degrees and even master's degrees, but the EnergyVenture targets "the middle group" of students who are going to stay close to home to go to two-year colleges or four-year universities.

The EnergyVenture program director said 70 percent of the participants this year were racial minorities and one third was female. She said the coordinators were very proud of the racial



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make-up and that the male-female proportion was “excellent” for the first year.

“We are going to work on that next year and try to encourage more females to attend,” she said.

Treuil said students learned about a career a day at the camp, including process technicians, mechanical technicians, engineers and geologists, and at the last day they were lectured on how to land those jobs and how much money they would make. She added they will learn about more careers at a reunion scheduled in February.

The EnergyVenture Camp aims at improving and enhancing the image and awareness of the petrochemical and energy industries.



Students learned about careers in the petrochemical industry at the camp, including process technicians, mechanical technicians, engineers and geologist, and at the last day they were lectured on how to land those jobs and how much money they would make.

An informational brochure about EnergyVenture distributed at the Nov. 13 breakfast meeting says the Texas Industry Cluster Initiative report and the East Harris County Manufacturing Association named two issues to be fixed in the industry: “a negative image as a dirty and dangerous business” and “a lack of awareness of the good paying and high skill jobs with flexible hours available.”

The brochure says the EnergyVenture Camp participants’ information such as name, address, phone number and e-mail address will be maintained in the database and that recruitment campaigns and special career information will be sent to them periodically.

Jan Lawler, chief executive officer of Economic Alliance Houston Port Region, called the

EnergyVenture program “a systematic approach.”

San Jacinto College Chancellor Bill Lindemann said one of the biggest issues facing Houston and the whole nation is to produce students who have expertise in science, technology, engineering and math and that no where in the country he knows has such a huge concentration of careers in those fields as the greater Houston area.

The chancellor said the initiation of the EnergyVenture program is “an excellent and ideal first step” to help young people understand what opportunities they have in the petrochemical industry.

Monte King, manager of workforce development at Shell Oil, said it is amazing to see the program which was merely an idea less than a year ago became a reality in a relatively short time period.

King said Houston has been well-recognized as the oil and gas capital, yet as new energy account for more part of the energy industry, not Beijing, Dubai, Atlanta or California, but “our young people” can lead the industry and transform it to the new energy industry.

“We need to get the message out to the young people,” he said.