

Preparing the Workforce

New engineering program built to address employer needs

CONTRIBUTED TO
THE TELEGRAM

Meeting the growing demands in the region was the catalyst for Edgecombe Community College starting a new engineering program.

The community college will begin offering courses in applied engineering technology this spring. Registration opens Monday.

"There is a local and regional need for more prepared industry technicians," says Dr. Bruce Panneton, vice president of instruction and chief academic officer at ECC. "These are jobs and careers with great growth and family sustaining wage potential."

Applied engineering technology is a course of study that allows students to solve technical issues in the industry by using basic engineering principles and technical skills. ECC will begin a soft rollout of classes in the major this spring. According to Panneton, students can begin taking their required coursework, such



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Graduates of Edgecombe Community College's newest associate degree in applied engineering technology can enter the workforce as maintenance technicians, robotics/automation technicians or research and development technicians.

as general education classes and some courses in the applied engineering technology major. Full implementation of the program will begin next fall, with more of an emphasis on the engineering technician.

"Applied engineering technology provides a program that is more well-aligned with Industry 4.0," says Doug Parrish, instructor and program chair

of industrial and technical trades at ECC. "With this program, we can meet increasingly advanced technology needs of the manufacturing facilities in our service area."

ECC is leading the efforts in preparing the workforce for Natron Energy, Inc. The first sodium-ion battery Gigafactory in the US to be located at the Kingsboro megasite will create more

than 1,000 jobs in Edgecombe County. Natron Energy, Inc. is looking for battery assembly techs, manufacturing engineers and associates, quality control technicians, material handlers, pack assemblers and more. Many of these positions require the training that ECC already offers.

According to Parrish, graduates with an associate degree in applied

engineering technology can enter the workforce as maintenance technicians, robotics/automation technicians or research and development technicians.

"This program will be beneficial to employers looking for an entry-level person who has the groundwork to help improve plant efficiency, safety, production, operations and more," says Parrish.

Want to register?

Edgecombe Community College offers more than 100 programs, including nursing, surgical technology, agribusiness technology, accounting and a new applied engineering offering.

Visit the college's website at edgecombe.edu to learn more about becoming a student.

For general questions, call (252) 618-6526. Registration for spring courses open Monday.

In the first year, applied engineering technology students will learn the basics of electricity, mechanics, management, safety and more. In the second year, Parrish says, students will take more engineering-related courses, such as engineering design and engineering software.

To register for the applied engineering technology program, visit edgecombe.edu, or call (252) 618-6525. Classes start Jan. 7.