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**HAMPTON**

## **Programs at New Horizons expand career options**

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HAMPTON

— Not every job field is shrinking in this economy. In response to industries that are still growing, New Horizons Career and Technical Education Center is expanding its training offerings for local high school students and adults.

Several programs will be added or upgraded, in part with the help of grant money, to fill local job needs.

Members of the inaugural class of a new apprenticeship program with the Hampton fire department is a month away from completing its first-year curriculum, according to New Horizons Butler Farm campus Principal David Creamer.

The idea came from Hampton Fire Chief James A. Gray Jr.'s interest in developing a partnership where the department could hire students out of high school to fill expected shortages in the near future.

The resulting training program has students earning Firefighter I and II certifications as high school juniors, then going on as seniors to complete Emergency Medical Technician basic training. Students will also earn 20 college credits through dual enrollment with Thomas Nelson Community College.

Completion of a one-year apprenticeship program will fully qualify them for employment.

"Now this is something that has not been done before in this area," Creamer said. "As far as we could determine, it's not been done in this state before — an apprenticeship through a high school and continuing."

The initial group of 17 high school juniors is now down to 10. Managing extra hours of training after school and on weekends was the main reason students dropped out, Creamer said.

"We're really excited," Creamer said. "That program is something special right now."

Next school year, New Horizons will pair up with the Hampton Roads Public Works Academy to introduce students to potential careers in that field, Creamer said.

The two-year program includes a paid internship between students' junior and senior years, or after graduation.

New Horizons' welding program is expanding through a partnership with TNCC.

The program is being paid for by part of a \$1.99 million Community-Based Job Training Grant that the college received from the U.S. Labor Department to provide employees for the manufacturing industry.

Creamer expects to train 30 to 40 percent more students on the Hampton campus because seniors can be taught at TNCC during the day, where more equipment is available.

Welding students will be able to receive higher levels of training and certification with more specialized one-on-one training, Creamer said.

"Welders are probably the most in-demand career area right now," Creamer said.

The same grant will allow New Horizons high school and adult students to train on precision machining equipment at TNCC next school year. That program will expand from half-time to full-time in the fall.

"So it's an exciting time, and it's the first time that New Horizons has ever partnered with Thomas Nelson in such a manner in both high school and adult programs, and that makes it really exciting," Creamer said.

### ***What is New Horizons?***

New Horizons Career and Technical Education Center collectively provides career and technical training to students from Peninsula-area high schools. It has campuses on Butler Farm Road in Hampton and Woodside Lane in Newport News.

It is part of the New Horizons Regional Education Centers, which are owned and operated by the six Peninsula school districts.

Programs includes the Center for Apprenticeship and Adult Training, the Center for Autism, Newport Academy, the Governor's School for Science and Technology, the New Horizons Family Counseling Center and GAITE — the Governor's Academy for Innovation, Technology and Engineering.