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Contact:

Deborah Renfrew (518) 629-7180, d.renfrew@hvcc.edu

Jennifer Reed Holick (518) 640-8967, (518) 817-0154, jennifer.holick@twcable.com

Alan Wechsler (862)-1090 ext. 3561, anw@nyserda.org

Introducing Teens to Technology

*100 Middle School Students Learn About High-Tech Jobs of the Future
At Event Sponsored by Hudson Valley Community College, NYSERDA, Time Warner Cable*

MALTA – More than 100 Capital Region middle school students came to Hudson Valley Community College’s TEC-SMART facility Friday morning to learn about the skills it takes to work in today’s high-tech industry.

The event, co-sponsored by Hudson Valley, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and Time Warner Cable, made use of Time Warner’s “Connect a Million Minds” program. The curriculum uses a variety of media to teach math, science and technology to middle-school students.

During the event, students from Ballston Spa and Burnt Hills middle schools visited stations run by Time Warner employees who had volunteered to talk about the technology they use every day. At one table, volunteers used different-sized balls in a plastic tube to illustrate how large files can clog up electronic communications. At another, a volunteer showed students a sample of an underground fiber-optics line. A third used a Hula Hoop to show how electronic information moves from one computer to another.

Both college and grade-school students come to the TEC-SMART facility to learn about new technology. The facilities include a mock clean-room, working solar cells and wind turbines.

State Senator Roy J. McDonald and Assemblyman Tony Jordan started off the event by addressing students.

“This is part of the future. This is important,” said Senator McDonald, who noted he was once an HVCC student. “The future of technology is not in Raleigh, North Carolina, or in California. It’s right here in Malta.”

Assemblyman Jordan said the students present today would one day be doing jobs that they could not imagine, thanks to the rapidly increasing growth of computers, phones and other high-tech products.

“When your parents ask you what you did today, you can tell them, ‘I learned about the future. I learned about technology,’” he said.

The event was a joint effort between Hudson Valley, NYSERDA and Time Warner. It took place Friday, April 8, at the Training in Education Center for Semiconductor Manufacturing and Alternative and Renewable Energies (TEC-SMART) site. The building is owned by Hudson Valley and is part of NYSERDA’s Saratoga Technology + Energy Park® (STEP®).

Students said they were impressed by how big a role technology would play in future jobs. Marley Amico, 13, an eighth grader at Ballston Spa Middle School, said she learned enough about clean-energy technology at the event to consider using renewable energy in her chosen field – music. For instance, she wondered, why not have solar-powered concerts? “We can make a difference,” she said.

George Stack, 14, also of Ballston Spa, said he enjoyed learning about jobs that might be available in the future. “The fields of science and engineering and math are definitely playing a big part in the future. I definitely want to be a part of that,” he said.

Bob Callender, vice president for operations and energy services at NYSERDA, started the program by asking students how many of them had iPods, cell phone or computers. Nearly all the students raised their hands. “Computer chips will be produced right here at GLOBALFOUNDRIES in Malta,” Callender said. “With the right math and science skills, you can not only use these high-tech gadgets, you can make them too.”

John Quigley, area vice president for Time Warner Cable, said: “The future of jobs in America – 80 percent of the jobs – are going to require science and math skills.”

Dr. Carolyn Curtis, vice president for academic affairs at Hudson Valley, said: “There is nothing more important than your education. That’s what today is all about. You are our future engineers, politicians, educators. We are going to be depending on you.”

Founded in 1953, Hudson Valley Community College offers more than 70 degree and certificate programs in four schools: Business; Engineering and Industrial Technologies; Health Sciences; and Liberal Arts and Sciences; and an Educational Opportunity Center for academic and career training. One of 30 community colleges in the State University of New York system, it has an enrollment of more than 14,000 students, and is known as a leader in distance learning initiatives and workforce training. Hudson Valley has more than 65,000 alumni.

NYSERDA offers objective information and analysis, innovative programs, technical expertise, and funding to help New Yorkers increase energy efficiency, save money, use renewable energy and reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. NYSERDA professionals work to protect our environment and create clean-energy jobs. A public benefit corporation, NYSERDA has been developing partnerships to advance innovative energy solutions in New York since 1975.

Time Warner Cable’s East Region provides technologically advanced video, Internet and telephone services to more than 5.9 million residential and business customers. Time Warner Cable’s East Region serves more than 1,300 cities in nine states, including Alabama, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. The East Region has more than 17,000 employees focused on delivering the company’s mission every day by connecting people and businesses with information, entertainment and each other.

Time Warner Cable’s “Connect a Million Minds” program is a five-year, \$100 million philanthropic initiative to address America’s declining proficiency in science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM. Using its media assets, Time Warner creates awareness of the issue and inspires students to develop their hard science skills. Program highlights include public service announcements, grants, online resources and Time Warner employees – 47,000 of them, many of whom are volunteering at community events like science fairs, career days and robotics competitions.