



NC Community Colleges
Hope • Opportunity • Jobs

Dr. R. Scott Ralls, President

PRESS RELEASE

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North Carolina Community Colleges Unveils Career Launch Pad *Mobile Lab Gets New Look, New Focus*

RALEIGH – With funding from Duke Energy’s Community College Grant Program, the North Carolina Community Colleges’ BioNetwork Mobile Laboratory is getting a facelift and an expanded focus. The Career Launch Pad will continue to emphasize biotechnology while extending its outreach to include healthcare, aerospace, and green technologies.

This 40-foot long, 12-foot high, and 11-foot wide educational lab will travel across the state highlighting hands-on scientific demonstrations and activities as well as computer-simulated learning stations to introduce high school and community college students to potential educational and career paths in science, technology, engineering and math-related industries.

The grant funding from the Duke Energy Community College Grant Program will allow the Career Launch Pad to visit schools, community and economic events, career fairs, and more where North Carolinians can experience the Launch Pad’s activities and get questions answered about the type of education needed for prospective careers. The ultimate goal is to help revitalize interest in careers in advanced manufacturing and promote new careers in energy, life sciences and other high tech industries across the state.

“Our colleges have long had a focus on technical education but, for a variety of reasons, students seem to be losing interest in these critical careers,” said Dr. Scott Ralls, president of the NC Community College System. “Duke Energy’s injection of resources allows us to create the environment and tools that generate interest among both young people and those changing careers. The Career Launch Pad’s slogan is ‘Launching Bright Futures,’ meaning a bright future for employees and employers.”

"Duke Energy is proud to partner with NC Community Colleges. Our \$14 million grant program is designed to extend their expertise in training workers for vital careers in our state. The mobile launch pad is an innovative way to promote jobs and industries that are an essential part of North Carolina's future," said Brett Carter, President, Duke Energy Carolinas.

The Career Launch Pad will be set up at each event for one of two types of tours. One would be an awareness visit during which individuals would tour and spend a brief amount of time on the bus while they attend community and economic events or career/job fairs. The second type of tour will provide more opportunity for students to spend time involved in scientific activities and computer simulation programs that explore a variety of career focuses. No matter what kind of stop the Career Launch Pad makes, North Carolinians of all ages will benefit from stepping on board and finding the fun in science, technology and potential careers.

The Career Launch Pad will unveil its new look at the NC State Fair, October 15-25, 2009 in Raleigh. For information on when the Career Launch Pad may be in your area, go to www.ncbionetwork.org and access the BioNetwork calendar.

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