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SVCC Cisco Academic Training Center Earns Recognition

RICHLANDS---The Virginia Council for Career and Technical Education has selected the Cisco Academy Training Center for Sponsored Curriculums (CATC-SC) on the campus of Southwest Virginia Community College (SVCC) as this years' recipient of the "Creating Excellence in Education Award." Dan Bowling, Professor of Electrical/Electronics at SVCC and Director of the CATC-SC, will be presented the award at the annual meeting in Roanoke, Virginia later this summer.

Two years ago SVCC entered into a training partnership with Cisco Systems, a worldwide leader in the manufacturing of switches and routers for Internet services. The partnership involved creating a Cisco Academy Training Center for Sponsored Curriculums (CATC-SC) on the campus of SVCC to train teachers across the mid-Atlantic and southern states in cutting-edge technologies. The College is currently serving as a Regional Training Academy for Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) and is one of the first colleges in Virginia to initiate the training courses for students to complete the prestigious Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP) Certification. "I can't say enough about all of the initiatives that we have on our campus related to Information Technology (IT), but the CATC-SC certainly stands out as one of the most promising resources for training IT teachers in Virginia and surrounding states" said Dr. Charles King, President of SVCC.

To date the CATC-SC has trained seventy teachers from sixteen different post-secondary schools and twenty-three secondary schools representing Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia. The majority of these teachers have returned to their respective career and technology centers or community colleges and implemented new course offerings/opportunities for their students. For example, some school divisions are offering dual enrollment for Fundamentals of Web Design, Fundamentals of UNIX and Fundamentals of JAVA. Fundamentals of IT Essentials I and II (which are offered more at the career and technology centers) are now being included in articulation agreements between career and technology centers and community colleges. In addition, the Virginia Department of Education recently announced that JAVA will take the place of the “Advanced Placement C++” course. There is also a move within the state to studying how students can be awarded verified credits for passing the end of course test in courses such as: Cisco Semesters I, II, III, and IV as well as IT Essentials I and II. Currently Buchanan County is the only county in the state offering IT Essentials I and II as part of the vocational school curriculum. Russell County recently announced that they will be offering IT Essentials I and II at two of their high schools next year. Currently Russell County is the only secondary school division in Virginia offering Fundamentals of Web Design. The purpose of the CATC-SC is to train teachers in public/private secondary and post/secondary education to offer new and exciting cutting-edge technology courses within their respective school divisions.

The CATC-SC has enabled SVCC to offer an expanded curriculum in IT training courses. According to Bowling, “the CATC-SC has been successful due to the hard work and dedication of full-time faculty Vaughn Lester, Shawn McReynolds, Michael Brown,

Brian Hale, Anthony Roberts, as well as a host of adjunct faculty.” Students enrolled in the Computer and Electronics Technology program not only graduate with the AAS degree but more often than not, graduate with one or more of the industry approved certifications such as: Cisco Certified Network Associate, Cisco Certified Network Professional, A+ Certification, Network +, and I-net + to name a few. “Without a doubt this makes our graduates very attractive to the businesses seeking to hire IT professionals and this is what we are all about,” said Bowling.