

For immediate release:

Governor Culver visits new PHCC (Plumbing Heating & Cooling Contractors) statewide apprenticeship program laboratory in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

On January 7th, 2009, Iowa Governor Chet Culver visited with apprentices, company contractors, and local and state dignitaries at the PHCC-IA apprenticeship program laboratory in Cedar Rapids. "We need this type of program to make sure we have the skilled workforce ready and able to help us recover and build a better and stronger Iowa," Culver said.

PHCC-IA is a statewide association of contractors engaged in the fields of plumbing and HVAC. The organization started their two apprentice programs in 1992 through the Eastern Iowa Chapter of PHCC. Initial classes were held on Kirkwood's campus in 1994 and in the fall of 2001, PHCC through ACE funding, established the plumbing and HVAC lab in Washington Hall with Eastern Iowa contractors donating almost all of the equipment we currently utilize. PHCC members even did a lot of the actual construction to remodel the room. Through their equipment donations, labor and support, Kirkwood was able to start their current plumbing and HVAC credit and non-credit programs the following year.

The Iowa Plumber and Mechanical Professional Licensing Act passed in 2007 with minor amendments made during the 2008 legislative session. Union and non-union partners came together to support statewide licensing. Under the new legislation, all new plumbers and HVAC technicians must complete a four-year apprenticeship program as a provision to obtaining a state license. The importance of this and other apprenticeship programs will only expand in the near future. With PHCC having a program in place for over 15 years in Eastern Iowa, they are now able to provide quality education statewide to apprentices, which will only enhance the quality of work being performed in Iowa while at the same time, increasing the public's water safety and heating and cooling comfort.

The four-year hybrid apprentice programs are set up to allow apprentices from across the state to obtain hands-on training in the laboratory on Kirkwood's campus twice a year, for two separate one-week sessions. The balance of their annual apprentice education is delivered via online education.

For further information on statewide licensing contact Kevin Kruse at 515/282-8192. For more information on apprenticeship contact Valerie Preston at 319/373-2145.

Photo:
Kevin Kruse, PHCC-IA Executive Director; Dr. Mick Starcevich, President Kirkwood College; Valerie Preston, PHCC-IA Apprenticeship Director; Governor Chet Culver; and Gary TerWee, PHCC President.

