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BridgeValley President Announces Retirement in July 2016

South Charleston, W.Va. — Dr. Jo Harris, President of BridgeValley Community and Technical College, announced her retirement effective July 2016 to the college's Board of Governors in a regular meeting Friday. Harris has led the college for 12 years, first navigating the creation of an independent institution followed by the consolidation of Bridgemont and Kanawha Valley Community and Technical Colleges into BridgeValley, a multi-campus college with sites in Montgomery and South Charleston.

"BridgeValley would not be the success it is today without Dr. Harris' leadership," said David Lewia, Chair of the BridgeValley Board of Governors. "President Harris has undoubtedly laid the foundation for a bright future for the college."

During Harris' time, BridgeValley was named the lead institution in the 9-college consortium of community and technical colleges that received a \$25 million award under the Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training funding program. The award has strengthened programs in the areas of manufacturing, energy, information technology, and construction across West Virginia.

"Dr. Harris has been a transformational leader when it comes to the relationship between industry and higher education in West Virginia," said Dr. Sarah Tucker, Chancellor of the Community and Technical College System of West Virginia. "The success of BridgeValley's partnership with Toyota Motor Manufacturing to deliver the Advanced Manufacturing program has not only created a statewide model for how education and industry can work together to support economic development, but also made it possible for students to complete their college degree without student loans and obtain high-paying careers at home. Personally, Dr. Harris has been a terrific mentor and friend to whom I am indebted."

Harris oversaw the opening of the 55,000 square-foot Advanced Technology Center of South Central West Virginia (ATC) located on the college's South Charleston campus. This facility provides a state-of-the-art training facility for customized workforce development. Last year, BridgeValley and Toyota Motor Manufacturing announced the naming of Toyota Hall, now the academic hall designation for the ATC, in recognition of Toyota's investment of over \$1 million to support the continued development of manufacturing education at BridgeValley.

"Having served in the West Virginia higher education system for 41 years and as a college president over the last 12 years, I have been provided unique opportunities that very few individuals experience during their careers. It has been my privilege to be a part of the creation of the community college system in West Virginia and to work with a dedicated team of faculty and staff who were adaptable and flexible through the many changes that culminated in the creation of BridgeValley." Harris stated.

The BridgeValley Board of Governors will form a Presidential Search Committee to conduct a comprehensive search for Harris' successor in the coming weeks. The committee will include representation from the Board of Governors, faculty, staff, students and industry partners.

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