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**The Dow Chemical Company Recognized Graduates of an Accelerated Chemical Processing Technology Program Offered in Partnership with BridgeValley**

**South Charleston, W.Va.** — The Dow Chemical Company honored graduates of the new Accelerated Chemical Processing Technology program offered in collaboration with BridgeValley Community and Technical College. During the seven-month program, students spent three days a week receiving classroom instruction and two days a week working in several of Dow Chemical’s West Virginia Operations facilities. Each of the graduates will begin working full-time at Dow beginning in May.

“This was a great group of students who worked extremely hard to balance life, school, and at times a second job,” said Marjorie White, Dow Operations Leader for the Triton® Facility. “This program provides students a fantastic opportunity to gain experience while also having a seven-month long job interview. The Learn and Earn program helps us maintain the technically-skilled workforce we need to remain competitive in the marketplace.”

The Accelerated Chemical Processing Technology program at BridgeValley is one of many partnerships being built across the state between industry and community and technical colleges as part of the Learn and Earn program. When approved, the state of West Virginia will reimburse the employer 50% of the student’s salary. The key aspects of these collaborations is allowing students to earn a wage to off-set education costs while still enrolled in college, while gaining valuable industry specific experience.

“These graduates illustrate a path forward for our economy through partnerships between industry leaders and West Virginia’s community and technical colleges,” said Dr. Sarah Tucker, Chancellor of the Community and Technical College System of West Virginia. “By quickly responding to employers needs for a technical workforce, West Virginia’s community and technical colleges are delivering the technical training to give displaced workers and veterans high-paying career opportunities at home.”

Each of these five graduates were recruited either through a statewide initiative to retrain workers who have been displaced by the downturn in the extraction industries, or continuing outreach efforts to support West Virginia’s veterans. Currently, the United Mine Workers Association is providing grants up to \$5,000 for education, childcare, and other expenses for eligible miners and their family members to enter a new technical career. Veteran Education Benefits are also available to students who qualify.

“Beyond creating new career opportunities for West Virginians at home, these partnerships are key in strengthening the competitive footing for existing employers like Dow and supporting economic development efforts to recruit new companies like Proctor Gamble to the State,” added Tucker.

BridgeValley is now enrolling for similar accelerated programs in Welding, Chemical Processing, and Mechatronics beginning in June. Likewise, the college is currently working to replicate the success of the Dow partnership to include other local area employers in the chemical, manufacturing, and other industries.

BridgeValley Community and Technical College was founded on March 20, 2014 and serves a six-county region including Fayette, Raleigh, Nicholas, Clay, Putnam and Kanawha counties. The college operates campuses in both Montgomery and South Charleston, as well as the new Advanced Technology Center.

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