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- ✓ View and use photos from the dedication at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/governortomblin/>
- ✓ Photos of the Advanced Technology Center are available at http://www.wvctcs.org/images/ATC_Photos.zip

**Governor Tomblin, Community College System and Employers Dedicate
The New, Innovative Advanced Technology Center of South Central West Virginia**

South Charleston, W.Va. (August 19, 2014) – The first of two state-of-the-art Advanced Technology Centers (ATC) in the state was dedicated today, when Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin cut the ceremonial ribbon celebrating the opening of a 55,000 square-foot, two-story, multi-faceted training facility for customized workforce development and events at the West Virginia Regional Technology Park.

“Today we celebrated our continued commitment to ensuring our students receive the best education possible, and we marked a significant step in providing workforce development and training opportunities in West Virginia,” Gov. Tomblin said. “With the opening of the Advanced Technology Center, we are giving students at BridgeValley Community & Technical College and others in the region tools to receive the training they need with tailored programming designed to meet the needs of our economy now and in the future.”

The Community and Technical College System of West Virginia (WVCTCS) approved a new ATC to address the emerging needs of West Virginia in offering a well-trained, technically advanced workforce and to provide a state-of-the-art setting for collaboration in the delivery of technical programs among community and technical colleges. Built through a state-supported initiative, the center will offer high-tech facilities, current resources, and technologically advanced education to continue the legacy of technical innovation in the Kanawha Valley and South Central West Virginia. The ATC also offers ample laboratory space for programs such as: Advanced Manufacturing Technology, Chemical Process Technology, Advanced Welding Technology, Computer Networking Technology, and Emergency Management Technology.

The catalyst for designing and funding the two ATCs to serve the state's growing workforce training challenges came when Governor Tomblin was West Virginia Senate President and U.S. Senator Joe Manchin III was the state's Governor. "For our employers to be competitive, they need a highly educated technical workforce," said U.S. Sen. Manchin. "The Advanced Technology Center gives West Virginians access to a world-class facility and quality educational programming to be competitive in a global market."

U.S. Sen. John D. Rockefeller, IV, who chairs the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, which oversees science and technology policy, said, "Science, engineering, technology and math disciplines, or STEM fields, are crucial to training our workforce today for the jobs of tomorrow. The importance of ATC facilities across West Virginia cannot be overstated. That's why, as Chairman of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, I have long fought for investments in STEM subjects – and will continue doing all I can to keep West Virginia a valuable competitor in the global marketplace. I commend BridgeValley Community and Technical College and Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia for sharing that vision."

Leaders from automotive, chemical, energy, emergency management and information technology industries are already taking advantage of the center's spacious, private and technologically-diverse features. "Toyota West Virginia is very excited with the results of the Toyota Advanced Manufacturing Technology (AMT) initiative," said Millie Marshall, President of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, West Virginia. "We welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with BridgeValley Community and Technical College to develop the critical criteria for the program. The development and implementation of the AMT program (housed at the ATC) will not only help sustain operation of TMMWV's highly advanced manufacturing equipment and processes which are at the forefront of global standards, but, will also help West Virginia's manufacturing industry thrive."

Community and technical colleges in the Mountain State and nationwide are being counted on for leadership in improving manufacturing opportunities, addressing changing skill needs and adding technology in the work place. To build capacity, the West Virginia Community and Technical College System applied for and was awarded a \$25 million Department of Labor consortium grant in 2013. BridgeValley serves as the lead institution for this "Bridging the Gap" program.

"Raising the college attainment rate of our adult population is a solid strategy for advancing economic development efforts," said James L. Skidmore, Chancellor of the WVCTCS.

"Additional college graduates increase West Virginia's skilled workforce, assist in attracting new industries, and provide career paths for our brightest students without leaving the state. This new facility will offer programs geared to all learners that will lead to high-paying, high-demand careers in the region due to partnerships with industry leaders."

STEM outreach for high school and middle school students is a significant component of the ATC. The Exploration Laboratory was designed with a 3-D printer to augment the educational program through visual and theory approach. In 2013, BridgeValley received \$617,500 from the National Science Foundation S-STEM grant program. The five-year grant

offers scholarships for academically talented students entering its applied and engineering technology programs.

Through collaborative partnerships and private support, the ATC will play an essential role in the region by providing the latest technologies, programs, and expertise to support on-going economic development efforts. West Virginia can create the workforce industry needs by focusing on job creation; fostering economic development; and encouraging more students to enter Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers. The state's STEM council met at the ATC prior to today's ceremony..

“The ATC is not a typical academic building; it is designed for use by business and industry partners to set up customized training, by public school partners to encourage youth to pursue STEM careers, and by many educational partners to bring specialized offerings to the region when there is a demand,” said Dr. Jo Harris, BridgeValley President. “With the opening of the facility, West Virginia becomes part of a network of Advanced Technology Centers across the nation that focuses on creating critical partnerships between workforce education and economic development.”

Major General James A. Hoyer, Adjutant General of the West Virginia National Guard, and Dennis Dio Parker, Assistant Manager, Toyota Motor Engineering & Manufacturing, also gave remarks.

A second ATC is being constructed in Fairmont under the direction of Pierpont Community and Technical College.

For more details about the South Central West Virginia Advanced Technology Laboratory visit <http://www.bridgevalley.edu/advanced-technology-center-0>

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