



March 15, 2016

Consumers Energy, DTE Energy, State of Michigan adopt career pathway to ‘invisible’ energy sector jobs

Michigan leading the nation in education furthering careers in energy sector

LANSING – Consumer’s Energy, DTE Energy and the State of Michigan, all members of the Michigan Energy Workforce Development Consortium (MEWDC), have collaborated to create a pathway for career and technical education students to pursue jobs in the often “invisible,” or less visual, energy sector. This pathway will be adopted as Michigan’s 17th “career cluster,” providing students with the ability to study traditional academics while leveraging skills specific to an industry/career path. The Michigan Department of Education approved this new pathway on February 9th, with curriculum now available for interested high schools and community colleges.

“We all expect the light switch in our homes to go on whenever we choose, but many young people don’t know what goes into making that happen every day. The adoption of this new pathway will make careers in energy visible to many students who are unaware of the robust opportunities the energy sector can offer,” said Tracy DiSanto, DTE workforce planning and development manager and MEWDC Co-Chair. “Students are exposed to career paths every day – seeing opportunities in advanced manufacturing, automotive and IT when they get into a car, for example. Our goal is to create the same connection between education and job opportunities in the energy sector for these students.”

Michigan is the sixth state in the nation to adopt energy as a career pathway, joining Florida, Georgia, California, Indiana and Virginia. The MEWDC was able to accelerate the work necessary to accomplish these results through a grant awarded by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and USA Funds focusing on Talent Pipeline Management. This model calls for industry to lead the way through collaboration.

“Energy is the backbone of everything we do, and if you think about it, there isn’t a lot that can be done without it,” said Stacy Mowrer, director of learning and development, Consumers Energy and Co-Chair of the MEWDC. “The addition of this new career pathway will draw attention to the opportunities many students may not have considered as career choices, while closing the skills gap to better prepare high school students interested in pursuing a career within the utility industry.”

Currently, energy is incorporated into three of Michigan’s existing clusters – manufacturing, construction and agriculture. This new distinction will educate career and technical students, parents, counselors and educators about financially rewarding, reliable skilled trade jobs available within the energy sector, as well as build a talent pipeline to succeed the roughly 50 percent of current Michigan energy workers slated to retire by 2020.

“Career and technical education requires the content and standards to come from industry in that we are teaching what is most current and we are delivering to the business and industry the knowledge and skills they

need. This was refreshing as industry and the MEWDC came to us and identified a talent gap and worked with us to develop instructional programs,” said Patty Cantu, director of the Michigan Department of Education’s Office of Career and Technical Education. “As other career pathways already do, the addition of the energy sector will provide a direct pathway to both industry jobs and post-secondary programs where students can earn a certificate or degree and puts our state at the forefront of closing the skill gaps for critical in demand industry jobs,” Cantu added.

Adoption of Michigan’s 17th career pathway is the result of a successful partnership between more than 30 representatives of industry, workforce, education, labor and veterans. These organizations collaborated to form the MEWDC in 2008, with the goal of establishing competency and credentialing requirements for key energy sector jobs, while improving the energy industry talent pipeline.

About Consumer’s Energy

Consumers Energy, Michigan’s largest utility, is the principal subsidiary of CMS Energy (NYSE: CMS), providing natural gas and electricity to 6.6 million of the state’s 10 million residents in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties. Information about Consumers Energy is available at ConsumersEnergy.com, facebook.com/ConsumersEnergyMichigan and twitter.com/consumersenergy.

About DTE Energy

DTE Energy (NYSE: DTE) is a Detroit-based diversified energy company involved in the development and management of energy-related businesses and services nationwide. Its operating units include an electric utility serving 2.2 million customers in Southeastern Michigan and a natural gas utility serving 1.2 million customers in Michigan. The DTE Energy portfolio includes non-utility energy businesses focused on power and industrial projects, natural gas pipelines, gathering and storage, and energy marketing and trading. As one of Michigan's leading corporate citizens, DTE Energy is a force for growth and prosperity in the 450 Michigan communities it serves in a variety of ways, including philanthropy, volunteerism and economic progress. Information about DTE Energy is available at dteenergy.com, twitter.com/dte_energy and facebook.com/dteenergy.

For further information, members of the media may contact:

Stephanie Beres, DTE Energy, [313.235.5555](tel:313.235.5555)

Dan Bishop, Consumers Energy, [517.788.2395](tel:517.788.2395)