



July 18, 2019

For Immediate Release

Contact: Rick Szabrak, 740-652-7162 / rick.szabrak@fairfieldcountyohio.gov

Workforce Training Center to Launch in Fairfield County

A workforce training center will soon be launched in Fairfield County to improve skills of workers to better meet the needs of local employers. The center will first focus on training in manufacturing, skilled trades, and culinary arts. Other training programs will be added as employers identify needs. Ohio University Lancaster and Hocking College will provide the training.

The state has dedicated \$1.25 million of its biennium budget to the center, which will be located at 4465 Coonpath Rd. in Carroll, OH. Part of the initial investment will go toward helping train employees for Magna International, an international auto parts manufacturer that has recently announced its expansion into Lancaster with 300 new jobs.

“This was a great collaborative effort,” said State Senator Tim Schaffer, who submitted the amendment to the budget bill, House Bill 166. “Various entities came together to make this happen. I’m thankful to my colleagues in the legislature and Governor Mike DeWine for their support.”

The Fairfield 33 Development Alliance has identified workforce development as the most important issue for business attraction and retention. There have been limited short-term training opportunities available in the county. “This training center gives Fairfield County a new opportunity to promote to businesses looking to expand,” said County Commissioner David Levacy. “We have two great education providers that can help upskill a company’s current employees or build a pipeline of new employees for existing or new businesses.”

“We have long believed that Fairfield County would be a great place for Hocking College to offer programming,” said Dr. Betty Young, Hocking College president. “We’re in a great position to expand into the county and provide skills training for workers of today and the future.”

The investment for training for Magna will include a focus on robotics and advanced manufacturing.

“Magna coming to Lancaster is big for the city,” Lancaster Mayor David Scheffler said. “It will provide a lot of new opportunities in advanced manufacturing. Having this training center will be a key to their growth.”

The training center will be owned and operated by the Fairfield County Port Authority. The 72,000 square-foot building provides a mix of industrial space and classroom space which will be used to train future or current employees of local business. Its previous use was as the Opportunity Center for the Fairfield County Board of Developmental Disabilities. It no longer serves in that function and it is now excess property to the county. An opening date has not been finalized. The location gives Ohio University Lancaster a presence in the center of the county.

“Ohio University and the Lancaster Campus are pleased to bring the expertise of the faculty in advanced manufacturing and robotic welding to fulfill the current workforce training and education needs for Magna International,” Ohio University Lancaster Dean Jim Smith said. “Our partnership with Hocking College helps provide a broader range of offerings to meet County workforce development needs with additional short-term skills training programs.”

###