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http://www.pinalcentral.com/casa_grande_dispatch/area_news/cac-mcc-adjusting-curriculum-for-lucid-s-workforce-needs/article_51e4b94a-bd52-11e6-833c-8bb1c2c4de7d.html

FEATURED TOP STORY

CAC, MCC adjusting curriculum for Lucid's workforce needs

By KEVIN REAGAN Staff Writer Updated 20 hrs ago



Oscar Perez/PinalCentral

Peter Rawlison, chief technology officer of Lucid Motors, stands beside a prototype of the electric car the company plans to build in a million assembly plant to be built in Casa Grande.



Lucid Motors
Updated 20 hrs ago

Lucid lured to Pinal by area's
employee pool

\$700 million plant selected for
CG

Attesa looks forward to
collaborating with Lucid

Attesa looks forward to
collaborating with Lucid

+3
Lucid Motors

Lucid still has to raise funds to
build Casa Grande plant

Casa Grande officials pledge to
make sure Lucid Motors gets to
 +3
finish line

Casa Grande officials pledge to
make sure Lucid Motors gets to
finish line

+2

CASA GRANDE - Access to a solid workforce was touted by Lucid Motors last week as one of the reasons it picked Casa Grande for its assembly plant.

Edna gets an upgrade- Lucid
Motors vehicle

The California-based company intends to pull local talent to fill the 2,000 jobs projected to be created through the electric car manufacturing plant it aims to build near Thornton and Peters roads.

The company said it plans to start hiring in the first half of 2017, creating a demand for manufacturers and engineers skilled in electric car technology.

Central Arizona College has already been in talks with the company on how it can meet Lucid's needs. The college already offers degree and certificate programs in manufacturing, which are a gateway for entry-level technician jobs.

Pinal County industrial businesses, like Frito-Lay and Abbott Nutrition, partner with CAC to ensure outgoing students are equipped with the necessary manufacturing skills.

CAC President Jackie Elliott told the Casa Grande Dispatch last

Behind the headlines: Electric car plant would be huge job creator

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Lucid announces partnership with Samsung SDI

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week that a similar partnership will be formed with Lucid. She said the college is currently reorganizing some of its curriculum to better suit what Lucid expects out of its workforce.

Pending approval from the Higher Learning Commission, two new certificates in advanced manufacturing production will be offered by CAC starting in the fall of 2017.

Kristen Benedict, chair of the CAC Engineering and Technology Division, said these certificate programs will be specific to the types of high-tech jobs being created by Lucid.

Benedict's division was already starting to focus more on advanced, high-tech education before Lucid's announcement. She said the college wants to create a niche for itself by offering a manufacturing program that blends advanced topics like engineering and computer technology.

The college received a workforce development grant a couple of years ago, which Benedict said helped prepare the college for a partnership with Lucid.

She said the grant helped to build up her department by funding new high-tech equipment and developing another machinery program.

Connectivity to academic institutions is an important attribute for prospective companies like Lucid, according to Chris Camacho, president of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council.

A competitive workforce and low labor costs are other attributes GPEC highlights about the Phoenix area on its website. These perks are helping to transform Phoenix into a growing hub for auto innovation, Camacho added.

Lucid will have additional access to institutions in the Phoenix

area, where automotive technology is popular in academia.

Maricopa Community College reportedly had a 45 percent increase in degrees and certificates issued in automotive technology over the last four years. Many of the college's campuses teach automotive programs on-site.



Stephen Skroch is the director of Mesa Community College's automotive performance program. He said beginning this fall, nearly every course in the program is touching on some aspect of electric or hybrid car technology.

His program has begun opening up its elective options so students can gain additional knowledge in electronics or welding. Skroch said the skills needed to manufacture vehicles are becoming more advanced so the college will continue adjusting to the needs of the industry.

Lucid is aiming to produce an electric vehicle capable of driving itself with high-powered sensors.

Autonomous vehicles will create a demand for specialized mechanical skills among Arizona's engineering students, according to Robin Hammond, the director of Arizona State University's Schools of Engineering Career Center.

She works to assist students in transitioning into the career market. Most engineering students graduating from ASU, she said, stay in Arizona to work for various industries including automotive.

ASU offers an engineering degree that concentrates on automotive technology and design. The university also has a competitive club that designs and builds racing vehicles.

Automotive technology remains a popular subject in the career and technical education department at Casa Grande Union High School.

Steven Sipes, the department's coordinator, said the curriculum doesn't explore much of the innovative technology like electric vehicles since it follows education standards set by the state.

Though Lucid's announcement is exciting, Sipes is worried about retaining enough qualified teachers to instruct auto education. Industrial arts programs are not producing as many teachers as in the past, he said, but the school will continue trying to meet the needs of the auto industry with the resources available.