New Certification Program For Mission Critical Careers

International Society of Automation

Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, USA — The International Society of Automation (ISA) announces today that it will begin developing a new certification program as part of a recently announced $23 million federal grant to fund two-year degree programs in “Mission Critical Operations” at five North Carolina colleges.

The grant, administered through the US Department of Labor, is designed to prepare tomorrow’s workforce to compete for increasingly demanding, high-wage and high-skill jobs in industrial operations and information technology, particularly those defined as mission critical—“operations requiring round-the-clock supervision of systems” and those “aimed at combating the evolving threat of critical infrastructure operations failure.”

ISA’s new Certified Mission-Critical Professional (CMCP) certification program will test graduates based on the skills and body of knowledge taught through new Mission Critical Operations curriculum and degree programs to be established at Cleveland Community College, Wake Technical Community College, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Nash Community College and Moultrie Technical College.

While Mission Critical Operations encompasses a broad spectrum of career areas—including infrastructure maintenance, communications and emergency operations—ISA’s new CMCP certification program will focus on industrial operations, such as automation engineering technology, advanced manufacturing, and cybersecurity of industrial control networks.

More than half of the $23 million grant is allocated to Cleveland Community College, the grant consortium leader in North Carolina and a long-time workforce development partner of ISA and ISA’s sister organization, the Automation Federation. Nearly $1.5 million of the remaining amount will finance ISA’s development of the CMCP certification program.

“As an organization that has been training and certifying professionals for rewarding careers in automation, engineering and manufacturing for decades, ISA is uniquely capable to develop this new CMCP certification program,” says Dalton Wilson, ISA’s manager of Education Services. “Furthermore, our existing, long-standing partnership with Cleveland Community College will be a major asset as we work with educators there to craft a certification program that’s directly tied to the curriculum and degrees to be offered at the five colleges.”

Since the functions, skills and knowledge requirements of a Mission-Critical Professional in industrial operations and the precise coursework essential to train

one are not yet well defined, Wilson says it will take time to develop the CMCP certification program. Based on the grant proposal, the first full year the program will be offered will be 2017.

“A comprehensive job analysis needs to be conducted, and we’ll be identifying and engaging subject-matter experts to assist in developing the certification exam,” he reports. “Once completed, the CMCP certification will be another valuable addition to our certification offerings and, when combined with a degree in Mission Critical Operations, graduates in this field will be able to really differentiate themselves among prospective employers and significantly enhance their marketability.”

ISA: A global leader in developing certification programs for automation and engineering professionals

ISA already offers two well-established certification programs: the Certified Control Systems Technician® (CCST®) program and the Certified Automation Professional® (CAP®) program.

“These two ISA certification programs have been highly successful,” says Wilson. “They provide technicians and automation professionals with formal recognition and endorsement of their competency and proficiency. This is particularly valuable in today’s competitive marketplace, where workers are searching for ways to stand out from the crowd and boost their prospects for career advancement.”

He asserts that ISA’s leadership and expertise in industrial operations certification programs made it a logical candidate to be included in the US government’s “Mission Critical Operations” training initiative.

Building on ISA’s and the Automation Federation’s established partnership with the Cleveland Community College

The recently announced federal grant enables ISA and the Automation Federation to strengthen their existing workforce development partnership with the Cleveland Community College.

For the past several years, ISA’s subject-matter experts and Automation Federation officials have been working with educators and administrators at the college to develop a two-year associate degree program in automation engineering technology.

The college’s automation engineering technology curriculum and degree program are based on the Automation Federation’s Automation Competency Model, which defines the knowledge and skills workers needed to be successful in the automation industry.

In the spring of 2012, the Cleveland Community College became the first community college in the nation to join the US Automation Community College Consortium, a collaborative venture between the Automation Federation and the American Association of Community Colleges.

The Automation Federation has long regarded community colleges as essential for providing the community-based education and training needed to groom future automation and control professionals and engineers.

More **[1]about the US Department of Labor grant**

The recently announced grant to the five North Carolina colleges is part of the third round of funding under the US Labor Department's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) program, a multi-year, nearly $2 billion training initiative.

In September of this year, 57 grants totaling nearly $475 million were announced supporting projects in every US state plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The grants will expand programs at more than 180 colleges in growing industries and encourage geographic and industry sector collaboration through the development of statewide and multi-state college consortia.

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