

City, State Officials Join in Welcoming Green Jobs Academy to Marlborough

MARLBOROUGH (10-25, 2021) - City and state officials joined the staff of Green Jobs Academy (GJA), a workforce development program operated by the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC), to celebrate the opening of its new training facility, New England's only IREC accredited (Interstate Renewable Energy Council) facility for weatherization skills trainings.

Since 2010, GJA has been focused on preparing underserved and underemployed individuals for in-demand, living wage jobs in the weatherization and energy efficiency industries. As a BPI (Building Performance Institute) Test Center, GJA also provides continuing education credits (CEUs) and certificate programs for weatherization industry professionals.

The new facility, located minutes off Rte. 495 at 91 Bartlett Street – adjacent to the Campus at Marlborough industrial park – offers a centrally located, hands-on training site that provides entry-level skills training for jobs in the weatherization industry, in addition to flexible, customized continuing education training for experienced professionals. According to Melissa Cusson, Division Director of SMOC's Energy Conservation and Loan Assistance Programs, "We're doing our part to fight climate change and building up the workforce to get the job done. Moving our training program to a more centrally located site will allow more people to learn the skills and begin careers that will serve as the foundation of this country's current and future workforce."

Green Jobs Academy now occupies 6,000 square feet of mixed-use space that includes a newly constructed, state-of-the-art diagnostic cabin, which satisfies BPI testing and Department of Energy (DOE) training requirements. It includes enhancements such as a simulated attic with side knee wall, crawl spaces, garage, and renewable drill and blow walls. The mobile home test unit that was originally constructed at the previous GJA site in Worcester, was relocated to Marlborough. A stand-alone live fire lab will facilitate hands-on heating system and combustion safety training. Included in the training facility is a classroom and computer lab that will accommodate live trainings, online learning and online certification testing.

Mayor Arthur Vigeant noted that bringing the GJA training facility to Marlborough is aligned with his administration's efforts to create a more energy efficient and sustainable city. "It's great to have these training programs here in Marlborough where one day we hope to be 100 percent green energy," he said. Toward that end, the City of Marlborough, which received the designation as a Massachusetts Green Community in 2010, has purchased a number of electric and hybrid

vehicles and placed charging stations in public parking areas throughout the city. Plans are nearly complete to have solar panels installed on four of the city's schools. In addition, the city has converted all streetlights to LED and 80 percent of all Marlborough residents now receive their energy supply at a lower cost through a municipal aggregation program. According to the latest report from energy supplier, Inspire Energy, Marlborough's energy supply is 100 percent wind renewable and residents' total savings are over \$2.9 million.

Robert Guenther, Energy Programs Technical Coordinator for the MA Department of Housing and Community Development, assisted with the design of the diagnostic cabin at the new location, in line with the Department of Energy's requirements.

Other speakers at the ribbon-cutting event included State Senator Jamie Eldridge (D-Acton), State Representatives Carmine Gentile (D-Sudbury) and Maria Robinson (D-Framingham), who was nominated by President Joe Biden for Assistant Secretary in the Office of Electricity at the US Department of Energy. If confirmed, Robinson said she would be sad to leave Framingham, "but I will be in the trenches making policy – yet this is where the work is truly happening," she said. "Altogether, we will be working toward a single goal."

For more information about Green Jobs Academy, call: 508-626-7150. To learn more about the programs offered by SMOC, including the Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), visit <https://smoc.org>