

From: Godfrey, Rob
To:
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Subject: Gov. Nikki Haley announces application guidelines for S.C. Work Ready Communities Initiative

Gov. Nikki Haley announces application guidelines for S.C. Work Ready Communities Initiative

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Governor Nikki Haley today announced that the application and guidelines are now available for counties that want to participate in the South Carolina Work Ready Communities initiative.

Developed by ACT, a Work Ready Community is a measure of the quality of a county's workforce. South Carolina was one of four pilot states selected by ACT to participate in the ACT Certified Work Ready Community program. The South Carolina initiative certifies the quality of the workforce based on four criteria. Counties must meet goals for high school graduation, soft skills development, business support, and National Career Readiness Certificate holders.

"My top priority as governor is jobs for South Carolinians," said Gov. Haley. "We're participating in the Certified Work Ready Communities initiative because this program offers a nationally recognized and respected credential that shows businesses that South Carolina has the workforce and expertise that they need in order to grow."

Today's announcement was made at Zeus, a global leader in material science and high-performance polymer extrusions located in Orangeburg that supports WorkKeys, a pre-employment test for documenting and improving the basic math and reading skills of workers. All new manufacturing professionals at Zeus must take WorkKeys and score proficient to be eligible to work at the specialty tubing manufacturer.

Video of the event, including remarks by the governor, is available here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYjwUVwsyGw>

"Zeus believes strongly in ensuring and improving the work skills of all its employees," said Zeus Chief Executive Officer John M. Worley, Jr. "WorkKeys is not just a good business practice; it also gives our employees a sense of pride about the work they perform and helps to improve the overall quality of the workforce in South Carolina."

"Having a qualified and skilled workforce is the backbone for economic prosperity," said Lewis F. Gossett, President and CEO of the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance. "Through this cooperative local approach that aligns economic development, education, and workforce development, South Carolina will be able to demonstrate we have a ready workforce that can be competitive. More than any other factor, future manufacturing jobs will depend on this and other workforce development efforts."

The application and guidelines are available at www.scworkready.org.

Headquartered in Orangeburg, Zeus is a world leader in material science and the production of high-performance polymer tubing; employing more than 1,200 people worldwide with South Carolina facilities in Orangeburg, Gaston and Aiken. The company also has sites in New Jersey and internationally. Zeus products and services are preferred by companies in medical, automotive, electrical, fluid handling, aerospace, and mechanical markets. For more information about Zeus visit www.zeusinc.com.

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Rob Godfrey
Office of Gov. Nikki Haley
O: (803) 734-5074 | C: (803) 429-5086