

New IRSC Brown Center combines Innovation with Entrepreneurship to Create Jobs



FORT PIERCE, FL -- With the opening of the Brown Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Indian River State College (IRSC) is connecting training in energy and technology with services for business start-ups to create a powerful launching pad for new jobs on Florida's Research Coast. Over 500 community leaders attended the recent Dedication of the multi-purpose energy-efficient Center at the IRSC

Main Campus in Fort Pierce. Centered on the theme, "Energizing the Economy," the Dedication Ceremony featured activities related to biofuels, solar and fuel cell technologies, sustainable building construction, geothermal systems, nanotechnology and its marketable applications. Attendees toured the Center's technologically advanced laboratories which develop the skills necessary for employment or entrepreneurship and learned how the Center's business services help fledgling companies leverage expertise into successful businesses.

"The Brown Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is an unprecedented resource for the development of Florida's Research Coast," said Dr. Edwin R. Massey, IRSC President.

"Developed with the 'idea to market' approach, this unique facility fosters new ideas, new businesses and new jobs."

Adam Putnam, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, the featured speaker, said the new facility speaks volumes about the Treasure Coast's metamorphosis from farmland to a research hub.

"Florida has tide power, wind power, solar power and biomass capabilities, but we need a workforce to participate in that – and that workforce development will occur right here at IRSC and the counties that circle it," Putnam said.

Education in alternative energy and sustainability is central to the mission of the Brown Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Students learn how to produce biofuels, construct photovoltaic cells, experiment with light technologies and gain hands-on experience in all aspects of energy efficient building construction. Students and entrepreneurs eager to transform this knowledge into new businesses get the help they need from the Innovation Incubator.

Students in the College's highly successful Power Plant Technology Institute gain hands-on

experience in the FPL Energy Suite where a flow loop simulator will soon replicate the operations of a nuclear power plant. IRSC's record of success in nuclear energy education was recognized with a prestigious National Science Foundation grant to develop a Regional Center for Nuclear Education and Training (RCNET) serving 18 states and now based in the Brown Center.

IRSC also received a \$3.9 million Economic Development Administration Grant from the US Department of Commerce to support the economic development of the region through the training of students for high skill/high wage jobs in the new Brown Center.

The \$21.5 million facility itself is a learning environment. The 65,000 square foot building is constructed to Silver LEED standards of environmental design with recycled materials as a model of green construction. About 30% of the power for the three-story building is generated by a 150 solar panel field and three wind turbines, with energy usage displayed on lobby monitors.

The David and Barbara Hefflebower Alternative Energies Laboratory provides a high-tech setting for production of biofuels and study of solar and fuel cell technologies. Students also repair and maintain electric and hybrid vehicles.



The H.J. High Construction Sustainable Building Design Laboratory creates a multi-faceted environment for instruction in energy efficiency for heating/air conditioning, appliances and commercial and residential applications. A portion of

a 640-square foot "net zero" house is contained in the lab as a hands-on resource. Students use thermal cameras to determine energy leaks, learn how to weatherize and insulate, test for gases and evaluate hot water systems.

The study of nanotechnology and its marketable applications is the focus in the Advanced Materials Laboratory where students tap into emerging technologies. The adjacent Optics and Photonics Laboratory illuminates the use of light technologies and careers in this growing field.

In the business wing, the Innovation Incubator offers a wide range of resources, opportunities for collaboration and accessible and affordable space for new businesses to work, learn and connect. Membership provides one-on-one consulting, high-speed wireless Internet, discounts on seminars and workshops, working offices equipped with computers and meeting rooms, strategic planning and conference rooms. The College's Corporate and Community Training

Institute (CCTI) and Small Business Development Center are also based in the Brown Center. For more information about the Innovation Incubator visit www.IRSCbiz.com or call 1-888-283-1177.

For more information about IRSC programs and services in the Brown Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, visit www.irsc.edu or call 1-866-792-4772.