
High schools, VVC collaborating on career pathways programs

By Joseph W. Brady

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Many of you reading this know that my wife Deborah K. Brady and I like to travel and look at different parts of the country in search of ideas within these areas to bring back to the place that we live, work and play: The High Desert/Victor Valley.

Recently while having dinner in Prescott, Arizona, a gentleman eating at the table next to us struck up a conversation with me about his own community and its many great virtues. While we were discussing homebuilding, development and other topics this gentleman told me that his school district was helping to prepare young high school graduates for real jobs in industries that would especially benefit those not headed to prestigious universities such as Stanford, Yale, Harvard, etc. His school district in Chino Valley, Arizona, has one of the highest success rates for career pathways of any school district in the country.

Upon my return, I asked Victor Valley College Superintendent/President Dr. Roger Wagner to give me a better understanding of what our own local high schools are doing to prepare students for the workplace while imparting tools that they can use to move forward educationally if they ultimately wanted to attend our great community college.

Dr. Wagner immediately compiled a list of all the articulation agreements that Victor Valley College has with our local high schools as well as programs offered by high schools that lead to career pathways. I want to acknowledge some of the great programs offered by local high school districts that provide occupational preparation for their students, whether they intend to move on to community or four-year colleges or directly to careers that enable them to become productive, successful participants in the local economy.

In Apple Valley, such programs include automotive maintenance, culinary and restaurant operations, medical terminology, emergency medical response, EKG monitoring, construction technology, intermediate and advanced agriculture and industrial engineering.

While Barstow High School is not within the jurisdiction or boundaries of Victor Valley College, we have many students from Barstow that attend VVC and we have many students from the Victor Valley area who have opportunities to attend Barstow Community College. I have always felt as a trustee that we are all working from the same pool of applicants and students, so we should share as many programs that we can. The Barstow High School District offers culinary arts, criminal justice and digital video production and design programs, just to name a few.

Hesperia High School has multiple classes for automotive, restaurant and culinary arts, medical technology, introduction to nursing professions, fundamentals of law, criminal justice, advanced law enforcement, and construction technologies.

Oak Hills High School also offers a strong automotive program (do you see a pattern whereby many of our students have a strong and keen interest in the automotive industry, which hopefully benefits all our local car dealers who can hire these students?). Many of these students go on to attend the automotive program at Victor Valley College, now housed in a new \$6 million building that was completed in 2017. Oak Hills also offers food and nutrition, child development guidance and early childhood development courses, sports therapy and fitness, as well as advance law enforcement and criminal justice.

Sultana High School also offers a strong automotive program along with child development and guidance classes, medical care and construction technology.

Lucerne Valley High School, on the eastern outskirts of the Victor Valley Community College District, offers horticulture, automotive technology, restaurant occupations, agricultural biology, graphic communications and Auto Cad.

Adelanto High School's occupational training programs include automotive, restaurant, medical and criminal justice, while Silverado compliments that with culinary, restaurant, medical care and terminology, law enforcement and criminal justice.

Last but not least Victor Valley High School provides automotive maintenance, aviation (we cannot seem to find enough aviation maintenance employees to serve the many employers at Southern California Logistics Airport), the culinary arts and restaurant classes, along with medical care and an emergency medical response curriculum.

We need to encourage our youth to find career pathways as soon as they can while encouraging them to explore a variety of career alternatives while they are in school. Local high schools in the Victor Valley and surrounding communities have responded

to this challenge by developing a wide range of occupational preparation programs to serve the High Desert's workforce of tomorrow.

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