FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE TO RECEIVE AN ADDITIONAL $1 MILLION IN STATE FUNDING FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THROUGH THE ADVOCACY OF ASSEMBLYMEMBER RUDY SALAS

For the second time in consecutive years, Bakersfield College will receive $1 million in state funding for workforce development programs thanks to the advocacy of Assemblymember Rudy Salas.

Salas leveraged the state’s 2019-2020 budget, recently signed into law by California Governor Gavin Newson, to fund Career Technical Education (CTE) programs and the college’s Rural Initiatives program.

The funding will be put to use immediately to benefit Kern County residents. Bakersfield College has a proven record of quickly deploying resources to maximize the number of students who are positively impacted by education. Last year, for example, the state allocated $1 million in funding that enabled Bakersfield College to create and expand CTE programs in industrial automation; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC); and electronics. The programs generated nearly 1,400 enrollments in the North Kern rural communities and paved the way for students to work toward degrees and certificates to enhance their workforce skills.

Bakersfield College is rapidly increasing the skilled workforce in the Central Valley as students earn CTE short-term certificates that stack to an associate’s degree and a bachelor’s degree.

“Bakersfield College is committed to expanding the skilled workforce in our region for employers in Industrial Automation and in health careers,” said Bakersfield College President Sonya Christian. “I am proud of the faculty and staff at BC who have developed detailed plans for rural Kern County that can be immediately implemented as resources become available. I am very grateful to Assembly member Rudy Salas for his unwavering commitment to education to make our valley strong.”

Salas, represents the 32nd District, which includes part of the City of Bakersfield, as well as the rural cities of Arvin, Lamont, Delano, Shafter, Wasco, McFarland and Hanford. Salas continues to be a champion of education in these communities. His strong commitment and advocacy for the Central Valley has ensured that resources are effectively allocated to the communities in rural Kern County.
“Bakersfield College is at the forefront of developing and training our current and future workforce. Building on our success of securing $1 million in the state budget last year, we have now secured an additional $1 million to help expand access to Career Technical Education for our students and workers,” said Salas. “Under Dr. Christian’s leadership we have seen BC grow and expand opportunities for students in rural communities. I look forward to our continued partnership in delivering expanded opportunities in Career Technical Education and workforce training for our local students.”

This funding will expand the cohort of Industrial Automation students at the Bakersfield College Delano Center by funding completion of the Computer Integrated Manufacturing and Advanced Programmable Logic Controller labs. Meanwhile, the monies will provide resources for Bakersfield College programs by funding courses in Basic Electronics and Programmable Logic Controllers in Wasco. It will also pay for equipment and supplies for all four courses at McFarland High School to establish a cohort of high school students pursuing a Bakersfield College Certificate of Achievement (COA) in Industrial Automation while still attending high school, according to Abel Guzman, BC’s Executive Director of Rural Initiatives.

“Bakersfield College is increasing capacity in North Kern County by offering the Certificate of Achievement (COA) in Industrial Automation,” said Guzman. “The COA in Industrial Automation prepares students with the essential skills for positions such as industrial technician, automation specialist, maintenance mechanic, or field service representative. This COA includes four courses that can be completed in a year and incorporates an emphasis on hands-on instruction.”

The new funding will also pave the way for improved health care skills in Kern’s rural communities. Bakersfield College has been facilitating a regional collaboration of education partners, health care providers, community organizations, and health care industry leaders to deal with the issues of health and wellness in rural communities. This collaboration is looking to define and establish a model for rural health equity as it relates to wellness and workforce needs. The Salas funding ensures the establishment of pathways to address the health workforce needs and provides students access to entry-level health care jobs. The creation and expansion of health career pathways in North Kern will allow Bakersfield College to build capacity and expand access to quality education in these communities.

“Through its Early College Program, Bakersfield College is developing college pathways for high school students in McFarland, Delano, Wasco, and Shafter so that students can complete a college certificate or degree at the same time as earning a high school diploma,” said Kern Community College District Trustee Romeo Agbalog. “I appreciate the hard work of all the bold and innovative partners working to reengineer education and strengthen our local workforce, along with Assemblyman Salas for his continued support of this work to advance Career Technical Education programs in rural Kern County.”

Partnerships among public and private entities continue to create opportunities for Kern County to grow its resources that benefit its communities. Bakersfield College is proud to partner with the State of California and Assemblymember Rudy Salas to ensure these
critical resources generate maximum impact toward the development and strengthening of
the Central Valley.

To learn more about the programs, degrees, and certificates offered at Bakersfield College, visit

*Bakersfield College provides opportunities for students from diverse economic, cultural, and educational backgrounds to attain Associate and Baccalaureate degrees and certificates, workplace skills, and preparation for transfer. Our rigorous and supportive learning environment fosters students’ abilities to think critically, communicate effectively, and demonstrate competencies and skills in order to engage productively in their communities and the world.*

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