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## **Two innovative PCC initiatives are candidates for national awards**

**PUEBLO** – Pueblo Community College’s already strong reputation for developing unique methods of instructional services and delivery has gained it national recognition as two of its recent innovations have been selected finalists for national Bellwether awards.

The Bellwether Award program is part of the Community College Futures Assembly that is sponsored by the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Florida. It recognizes cutting-edge, trend-setting programs that other colleges might find worth replicating. The awards are given annually in three categories to colleges with outstanding and innovative programs or practices.

PCC’s advanced manufacturing training conducted through the development of a series of mobile learning labs is one of 10 finalists chosen in the Workforce Development (WD) category. And the HOPE Bridge Program it developed as a way to address recidivism through education is among 10 college finalists for the overall national award in the Instructional Program: Services (IPS) category.

Both of PCC’s Bellwether Award initiatives are grant-driven and are made possible through community partnerships. They also are good examples of PCC’s continuing focus on helping drive its service area economy through workforce development.

PCC representatives will be giving presentations to the Community College Futures Assembly on Monday, Jan. 25, at the organization’s annual conference in Orlando.

John Vukich, PCC’s Dean of the Economic and Workforce Development Division, will team with Amanda Ackerman, the EWDD’s Project/Resources Coordinator, to give an overview of PCC and the mobile learning lab program as well as specifics on challenges, goals and successes. They will detail how the program provides on-site hands-on skills

training in welding, machining, electronics and mechanical systems. The labs address a workforce development need in Colorado, particularly in the industrial and manufacturing sectors.

Juanita Fuentes, Dean of the college's Community Education & Training Division and Pre-College Programs, will present on the HOPE Bridge Program. Her presentation team includes Chris Cordova, district probation officer; Debbie Duran, Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC) parole manager; George Rael, HOPE project director; and Edmond Martinez, DOC parole officer.

They will explain how the HOPE Bridge Program provides a link (or bridge, as its name infers) that supports the transition of recently incarcerated adults into the college environment.

HOPE is an acronym for Helping Offenders Prepare for Education and Employment. Former offenders are provided the support services and educational opportunities during an eight-week transitional period that includes basic skills remediation and character development training aimed at preparing them to enroll in college.

Finalists in all three Bellwether Award categories (the other is Planning, Governance and Finance) will be honored the evening of Jan. 25 at a special reception. The overall winners will be announced at an awards luncheon the following day.

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*Founded in 1933, Pueblo Community College is a premier teaching institution focused on providing academic and service excellence to help its students acquire the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills needed to better their lives. An educational and technological leader, PCC fosters economic development and utilizes strong partnerships in the communities it serves through its Pueblo, Fremont and Southwest campuses.*