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PCC unveils new “Jaws of Life” equipment that will help train Fire Science students

PUEBLO – Students enrolled in the Fire Science Technology program at Pueblo Community College will be receiving even more advanced training in the future thanks to the recent donation of state-of-the-art “Jaws of Life” rescue equipment. That equipment was unveiled on campus Tuesday and then demonstrated at an off-campus salvage yard.

The equipment was received from L.N. Curtis and Sons, an Oakland, Calif.-based company that provides emergency responder equipment to public safety agencies in 13 states and the U.S. Government. Among the \$45,000 in items donated is the latest battery-powered “Jaws of Life” extrication equipment. The donation will have a tremendous positive impact on the Fire Science program.

The equipment includes:

- S 700E Cutter, a charger and 2 batteries
- SP 300E Spreader, charger and 2 batteries
- R 411E Ram, charger and 2 batteries
- SC 350 Combi tool, charger and 2 batteries

The S 700E Cutter is the latest battery-powered model of the Hurst “Jaws of Life,” the famous extrication equipment developed in 1972 by the Hurst Corporation that is used today by over 35,000 public safety agencies around the world.

The tools will be used in a newly-created beginning vehicle extrication class that will start July 11. According to program chairman Alan Ziff, PCC Fire Science instructors will receive special training from the vendor and manufacturer in the use of the equipment prior to it being used in the classroom. The new equipment will be used at PCC’s Pueblo campus, Fremont Campus in Canon City, and its Southwest Colorado Community College campuses in Durango and Cortez.

“Firefighting is very equipment-intensive, and these new items will provide our students with skills that will be make them more competitive in the workforce,” said Ziff.

He added that PCC currently has 73 students enrolled in its Fire Science programs. He noted that two PCC Fire Science graduates were recently hired in Colorado Springs by placing among the top 12 candidates out of more than 1,000 applicants for the positions.

Over the past several years, PCC has acquired a wide variety of structural firefighting equipment from Curtis and Sons, primarily through Perkins funding, for instructional use in the Fire Science program. PCC instructor John Webber arranged the gift from Curtis and Sons.

The school's Fire Science program, which prepares students for positions in the fire service industry, started in 2006 and has graduated approximately 50 students. "Our program has been growing in every way conceivable," Ziff said. "Our student enrollment has tripled in the last two years. We are offering courses in the Pueblo, Fremont, and SCCC service areas (in Durango and Cortez), and the types of training and course topics have also grown."

It includes a 21-credit-hour certificate program and as well as an Associate of Applied Science degree designed to meet the needs of fire protection and safety personnel. Courses include classroom instruction, independent study and hands-on training in conjunction with local fire departments.

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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 21st 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.