



**Pueblo  
Community  
College**

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## **PCC students' skills to be enhanced through donation of alignment machine**

**CANON CITY** – Pueblo Community College's Fremont Campus has received a major boost to its reputation as a premier teaching institution thanks to the generosity of a local automobile dealership. Lindner Chevrolet has donated a Hunter G-111 wheel alignment machine that PCC will use to train dual-enrollment students taking its Automotive Technology college classes in the auto shop at Canon City High School.

The donation was arranged through a meeting with Steve Lindner, the dealership's owner, and John Duston, PCC's Auto Service Technology instructor.

"Our motivation was to help the kids out, to enable them to get some training out of it and go on to a career," said Lindner, the dealership's owner. "We've trained a lot of people on it ourselves, and our main concern was to take care of the kids who might be coming into the business."

If purchased new, the alignment machine would cost approximately \$10,000. Its main training benefits will be for students taking "Suspension and Steering I," "Automotive Machining" and "Suspension and Steering II" classes.

"This is a great boost to our program here and will enhance the training that the students are able to get," said Duston. "Students will be able to earn a mini-certificate module by completing those three classes together, and that will make them more employable in this market."

Indeed, jobs and marketability are what the Automotive Technology program classes are all about. Skilled technicians are in great demand both in this region and throughout the country. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, auto technicians typically earn between \$30,000 and \$50,000 annually, with highly-skilled master technicians making over \$70,000.

Jobs are available in automotive maintenance and repair service as well as service writing and parts management. Robert Maez, Automotive Service Technology Department Chair at PCC, noted that PCC currently has 43 students employed with auto dealerships in Pueblo and another four in Canon City, providing an economic boost to both cities. Some of those workers have graduated from PCC while others are still taking classes.

Maez and Duston were instrumental in setting up the auto shop at the high school prior to its launching in the fall 2008 semester. Students gain ASE-certified training while earning college and high school credits simultaneously, thus getting a jump on their college education. They can complete an associate degree in two years, but along the way they earn mini certificates in several competency areas.

The collaboration that enables classes to be taught at Canon City High is crucial since PCC otherwise would not be able to offer the program at the Fremont Campus because of facility limitations.

Duston is PCC's full-time instructor at the high school with graduating PCC student Frank Cowgill his assistant. Sterling Jenkins, Coordinator of Academic Advising at the Fremont Campus, has played a huge part in working with the high school counselors, Duston and Maez to get students enrolled.

This is not the first time that the auto program has received items from the community. Previously, Charles and Heather McDuffie of Sears donated a car and a torque wrench, and Rod Wood also donated a car. The college also has received engines, differentials and a transmission from Lindner Chevrolet.

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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.*