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Thursday, November 21, 2019

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Gov. Justice honors graduates of first training course offered through Jobs & Hope West Virginia program



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CHARLESTON, WV – Gov. Jim Justice gathered with leaders of the West Virginia National Guard and the Jobs & Hope West Virginia Program at Camp Dawson near Kingwood today, hosting a graduation ceremony to honor the first ever class of students to complete a job training course through the State's new multiagency recovery and training program: Jobs & Hope West Virginia.

Six program participants spent a week at Camp Dawson, completing a 54-hour grader operator course taught by heavy construction equipment instructors with the West Virginia National Guard.

"This day is really important," Gov. Justice said in an address to the course graduates. "It's not every day that you get to genuinely touch a life. I am so proud of all that you've accomplished in such a short time and all we're accomplishing with this program."

[Video and photos of the event will be made available here for media download](#)



[Launched statewide by Gov. Justice last month](#), Jobs & Hope West Virginia offers support through a statewide collaboration of agencies that provide West Virginians in need the opportunity to obtain career training and to ultimately secure meaningful employment.

Throughout the duration of the course, students gained valuable knowledge on the operation of a road grader in order to enhance their skill set and make them marketable to companies seeking employees with experience in this particular heavy equipment operation.

The group of graduates are actively being connected with job opportunities. The West Virginia Contractors Association had potential employers on site this week to conduct interviews for the new graduates, with hopes of hiring individuals by Christmas time for many of their in-demand jobs.

One of the course's graduates has already been offered multiple positions to work as a grader operator.

"These great people are on their way and they're going to do real goodness in our state," Gov. Justice said. "I truly believe that if we stick with this program, and give a hand to our people who need it the most, to get them trained on a real piece of equipment where they can go get a shovel-ready type job instantaneously, this is going to absolutely work."



The course included 1.5 hours of environmental stewardship, 1.5 hours of interpreting construction plans, 1.5 hours of soil properties, 1.5 hours of surveying operations and grade stakes, 1 hour of preventative maintenance, 8 hours of introduction to other horizontal construction equipment, 13 hours of leveling operations, 13 hours of ditching operations, and 13 hours of leveling a road.

"Within 24 hours of the course being opened up, it was filled, and we had to add a second class in December to meet the early demand," said Maj. Gen. James Hoyer, Adjutant General of the West Virginia National Guard. "Not only is that a testament to the willingness of the people seeking assistance through the Jobs & Hope West Virginia program, but also to the long-term success of this new program the State of West Virginia has launched. We are seeing success stories come out of this inaugural class and I have no doubt that we will continue to see an upward trend in employment opportunities, workforce development initiatives and economic development from this program."

Students will be afforded an opportunity to return for future courses on other heavy equipment pieces.

Additional introductory grader operator courses for new students are already scheduled for December and early spring 2020, with more coming in the near future.

Assistance through the Jobs & Hope program is available to both those battling substance use disorder, as well as individuals merely seeking a pathway to more meaningful employment through job training, obtaining certifications, or other types of education.

The courses are free to participants, with food and housing available where necessary. Participants work alongside dedicated transition agents to determine the options and services that would be of most use to them.



Additional media content, including video clips and/or photos from this event, will be posted on the Governor's Office website as they become available. You can find a link on the thumbnail image at the top of this press release.



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