



For Immediate Release
February 20, 2013

CONTACT: Edwina Blackwell Clark
(419) 234-5440

Mitsubishi Electric Training Center Opening at Rhodes State College

LIMA, Ohio - Rhodes State College will create Ohio's only certified Mitsubishi Electric training center to help train workers at Honda of America's supplier facilities and production plants.

The college entered into an agreement with Mitsubishi Electric Automation, Inc. ("Mitsubishi Electric") to be the first location in the United States to provide training for Mitsubishi Electric's Programmable Logic Controls (PLCs). Previously training for Mitsubishi Electric PLCs was only available at Mitsubishi Electric Automation, Inc. headquarters in Vernon Hills, Ill.

Mark Werthman, senior manager technical support group for Mitsubishi Electric, said "the motivation for establishing the training center with Rhodes State is to provide more localized or regional-based training for our customers."

"Rhodes State is an ideal partner, as Ohio has the largest concentrations of our products in the U.S.," Werthman added.

Dr. Matthew J. Kinkley, Executive Director Workforce, Economic Development and Continuing Education at Rhodes State, said Honda has three plants within 45 miles of the campus and another 36-37 suppliers in the region. "Bringing the Mitsubishi Electric Training Center here puts us in a position to support those companies in a way we have not done before."

The Honda plants in Northwest Ohio use Mitsubishi Electric PLCs to drive their industrial equipment. Scot McLemore, Unit Manager of Corporate Technical Development

Honda of America Manufacturing, said Honda and its three manufacturing facilities have partnered with Rhodes State over the last several years.

“The addition of the Certified Mitsubishi Electric Training Center to Rhodes State College will further strengthen the opportunities for local students as well as incumbent workers to increase their skills and knowledge related to Mitsubishi Electric Programmable Logic Controllers, Motion Controls, Human Machine Interfaces and Servos,” McLemore said. “The ability of a worker to effectively implement and maintain such equipment will be critical for manufacturing in the future.”

PLCs are often used when a piece of machinery needs to perform repetitive and or sequential tasks. Last year, Werthman said, more than 600 people came to Mitsubishi Electric’s Vernon Hills office to receive training. In 2011, half of the students trained on PLCs.

Discussions with Mitsubishi Electric started about 1.5 years ago, Kinkley said, when the college decided to purchase a Mitsubishi PLC. The idea of future collaboration came up and the result is the establishment of the training center.

Kinkley said Mitsubishi Electric is giving Rhodes State its curriculum and will train the college’s faculty so that instructors can use Mitsubishi Electric’s standards to train the students. The Ohio Controlling Board approved \$80,000 to help the college purchase equipment and to renovate about 1,300 square feet of space in the college’s James J. Countryman Engineering and Industrial Technology Building for the training center.

Kinkley said the center is slated to open this Spring, and the college will be focused on training incumbent workers and current students in the Engineering Technology Division. The training on the PLCs could last from one to three days.

Antoinette Baldin, Interim Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Rhodes State’s Division of Information Technology and Engineering Technology, said she also sees great benefit in the training center because “the partnership allows for a growing opportunity for our faculty and students to interact with the industry.”

###