Laurel Ridge Community College Workforce Solutions

Power Line Worker Program

MEPAV Conference

May 22, 2026

Laurel Ridge Community College

- Part of the 23 college Virginia Community College System (VCCS)

- Service area consists of:
  - Winchester City; and Counties of Fauquier, Frederick, Warren, Clarke, Page, Shenandoah, and Rappahannock Counties

- Service region covers ~2,565 square miles
  - Fauquier Co is the largest county in terms of size; Clarke Co is the smallest (not counting City of Winchester)

- The population of our service region is a little over 350,000
  - Frederick Co has the largest population (95,110); Rappahannock Co has the smallest (7,260)

Workforce Solutions

- Community College – Comprehensive Mission
  - Workforce Solutions
    - The Four “C”s
      - Courses
      - Career Training
      - Credentials
      - Corporate Training
- Focus on training for high-demand industries in our region
  - Skilled Trades, IT, Healthcare

Workforce Solutions Classes…

- Workforce classes are:
  - **Typically, short-term**
    - Most classes much shorter than a semester
  - **Focus primarily on job skills / credential attainment**
  - **Great place to start** post-secondary education for many students uncertain of their career path or those struggling post HS or college
    - Our typical student does not begin as a college-bound or degree seeking individual
    - Confidence Builders
    - Low/No entry barriers
      - Do not have to “apply” or “test in” to competitive programs

Laurel Ridge COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

Popular Workforce Programs
Mirror regional economic demand

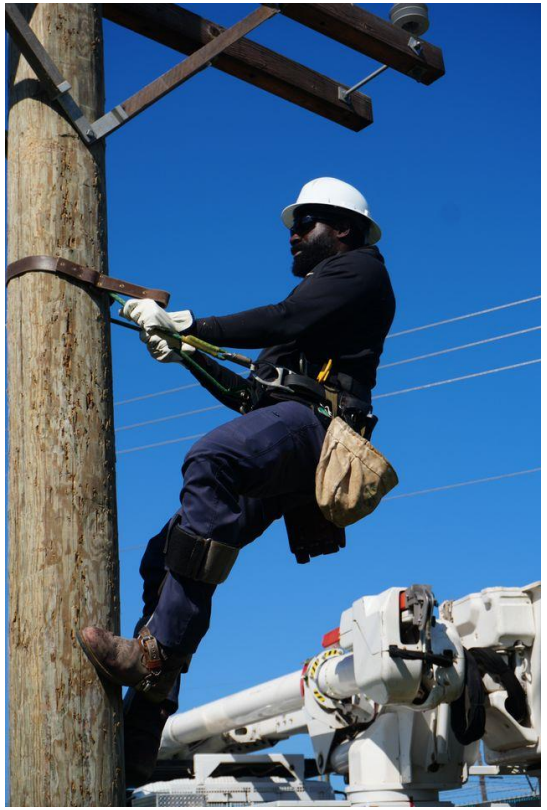
- Health Programs
  - Medical Assisting
  - Phlebotomy
  - Dental Assisting
- Trades
  - Electrical, Plumbing, & HVAC, Welding
  - Cloud Infrastructure & Fiber
  - Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO)
  - Construction Project Management
  - Power Line Worker
- Information Technology
  - CompTIA Certifications & Business Applications
- Transportation
  - CDL-Class A License
- Industry & Manufacturing
  - Advanced Manufacturing & Mechatronics
- Business & Professional Development
  - Supervision, Data Analytics, HR, Project Management

Workforce Financial Assistance…

- FastForward not considered Financial Assistance
  - Workforce Credential Grant for all Virginia Residents regardless of income
  - Available to employers/employees
- FastForward has two state Financial Assistance Options covering first 1/3:
  - **FANTIC** – All FastForward Programs are eligible for FANTIC
    - Based on Household income at *400% of federal poverty level OR a SNAP Card holder
  - **G3** – Select FastForward Programs are eligible for G3
    - Based on Household income at *400% of federal poverty level

*Family of 4 making under $132,000 is qualified for free tuition. An individual making less than $63,840 is qualified!

FastForward Example…



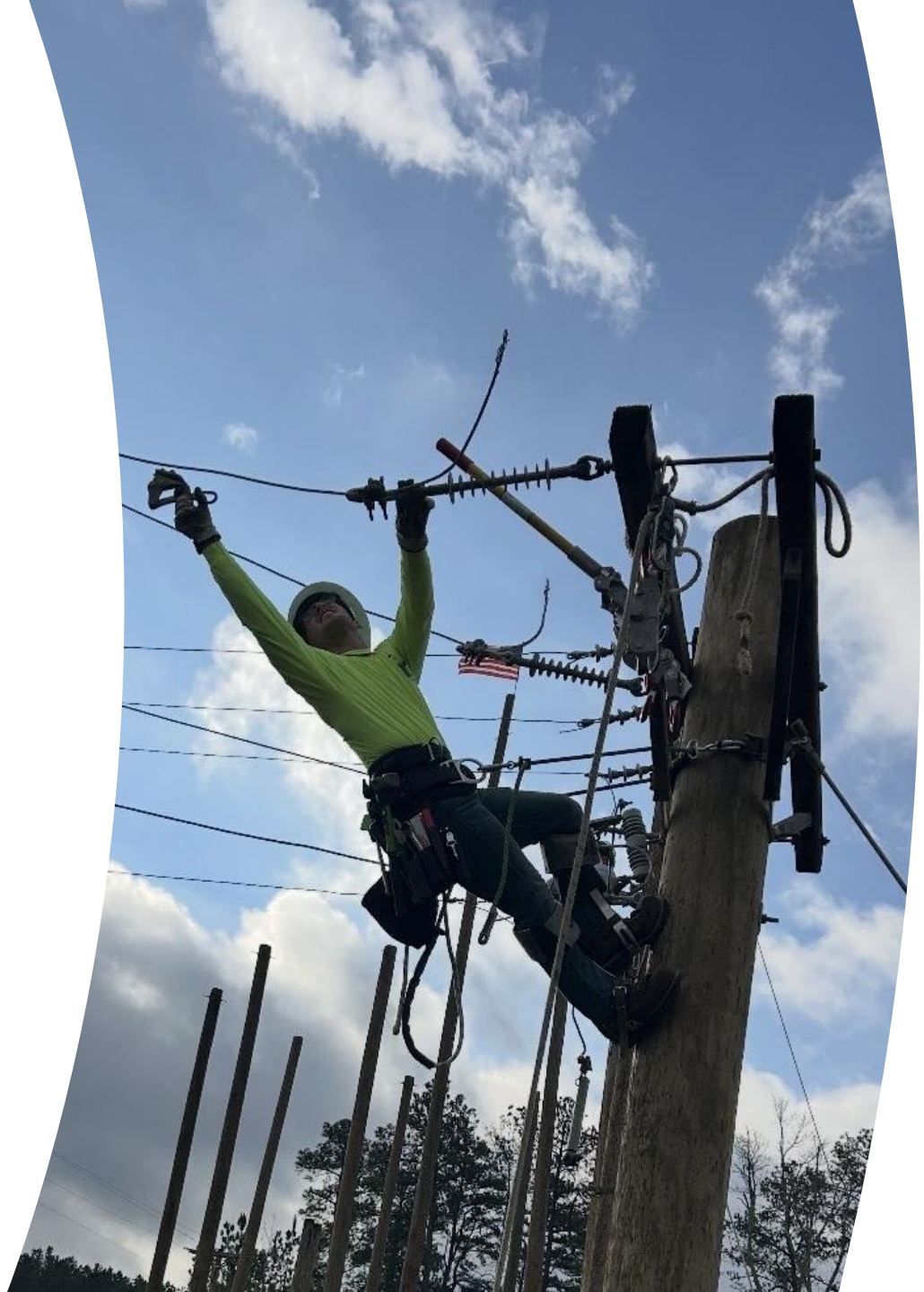
- Power Line Worker Program
  - FULL PRICE = $16,611
    - **Student must pay $5537** (1/3 of full price)
      - **If student qualifies for FANTIC/G3**, they pay nothing ($0)
    - **If student successfully passes class, they owe nothing more.**
      - **If student fails the class**, they will be invoiced for $5537
    - Regardless of whether they obtain credential, they owe nothing more if they passed class.
      - Workforce classes are **Satisfactory** (pass) / **Unsatisfactory** (fail)

Lightning Strikes- February 2024

- Laurel Ridge Community College Workforce Solutions
- Dominion Energy Virginia
- NOVEC
- REC
- SVEC
- Pike Electric
- Mas Tec
- River City Construction
- Town of Front Royal
- Altec
- NextEra Energy
- Blue Ridge Power Agency

NORTHWESTERN VIRGINIA
POWER&ENERGY
CONSORTIUM

The Pre-Apprenticeship Program



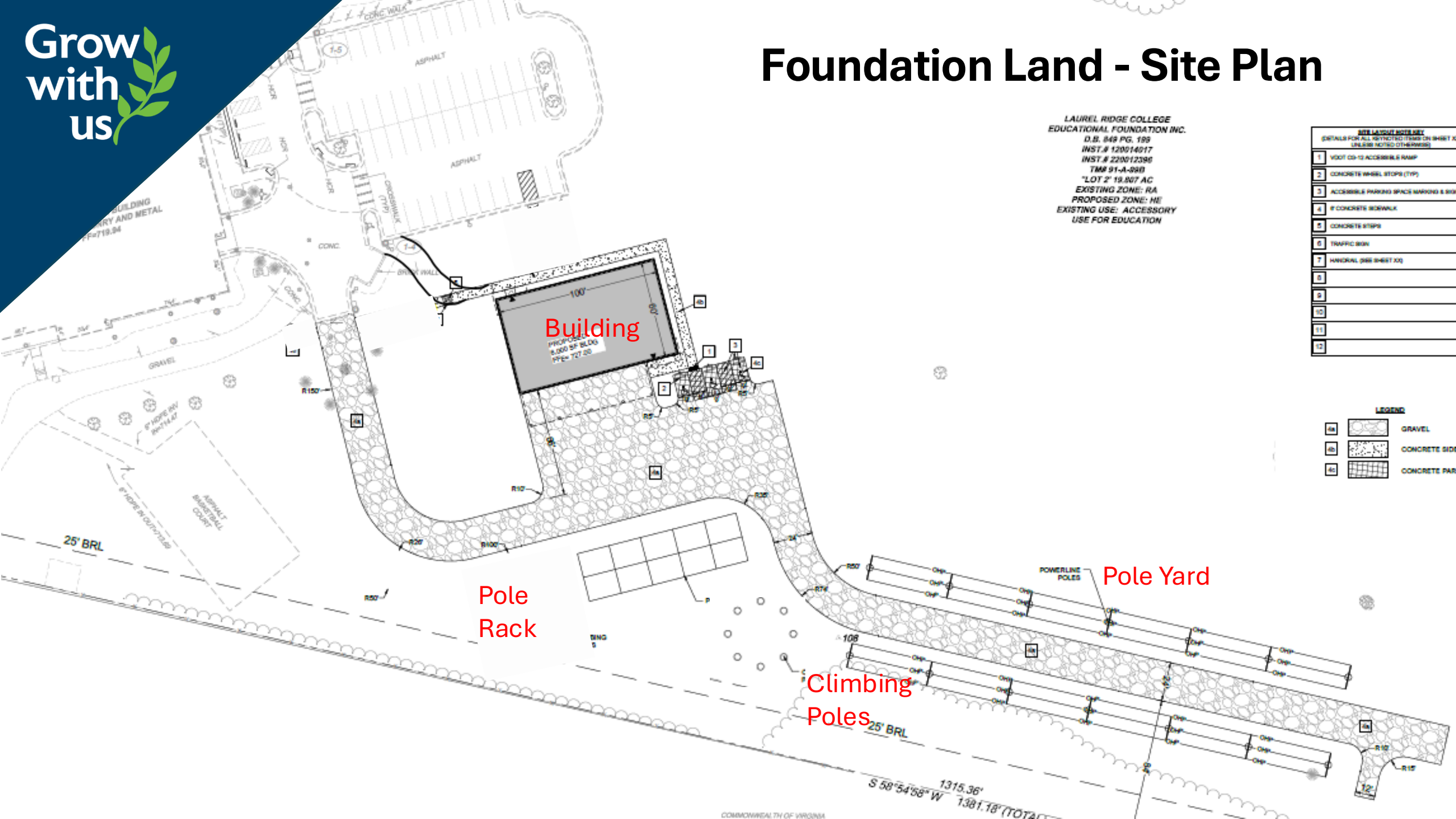
- 14-week full-time program
- 7 industry recognized credentials:
  - CDL Class A
  - Power Line Worker Level 1 (NCCER)
  - Power Industry Fundamentals (NCCER)
  - Heavy Equipment Operator (NCCER)
  - VDOT Work Zone Flagger- Intermediate
  - OSHA 10
  - First Aid/CPR
- Guarantee to Interview
- Three Cohorts Offered/Year
- 15 students/cohort
- Tuition: $16,611
  - State grant funding & financial assistance available to students

Student Accommodations

Fairfield®
BY MARRIOTT
Strasburg/Shenandoah Valley, Virginia

Facility

Foundation Land - Site Plan



Cohort 1- Fall 2025

- 11 students
- 10 successful graduates
  - 80% confirmed employed in industry within 2 months of graduation

Laurel Ridge Educational Foundation: Building the Future Campaign

- Facilities
- Equipment
- Faculty
- Scholarships

Campaign Phase 1: Skilled Trades Center at the Fauquier Campus

- Opened in October 2023
- HVAC, Electrical, Heavy Equipment Operations, Welding, Plumbing, Fiber
- Private Funding: Covered 50% of the cost

Laurel Ridge COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

Campaign Phase 2: Power and Energy Sector

Power Line Worker

- Facility Completion: January 2027 (goal)
- Total startup cost : $6M
- Received: $1.5M
  - $600,000 in private donations
  - $500,000 for two bucket trucks (federal grant)
  - $400,000 for equipment and faculty (state grant)
- Remaining need: $4.5M
- Funded by: College Reserve Fund

Trucks purchased with Federal Earmark

What's Next?

- Scale program up to 30 per class
- Substation Tech
- Diesel Gen Tech

Laurel Ridge COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

Launch of the Powerline Program

Powering Careers

Questions?

- AnnaJane Whitacre, Program Manager:
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  - (540) 868-9771
- https://laurelridgeworkforce.com/powerline
- Next PLW Information Session:
  - June 25th 2026 5pm-7pm