

DRS Imaging Partners with Southside Virginia Community College to Invest in Virginia Families

A new partnership between DRS Imaging Services, LLC (“DRS”) and Southside Virginia Community College (“SVCC”) has the potential to increase the skillset of Clarksville, Virginia residents, while also creating jobs in the local community.

DRS, a document scanning, storage and retrieval services company located in Clarksville, Virginia, and SVCC have created an innovative partnership, which offers college classes to DRS employees during work hours. The aim of the partnership is to empower DRS’ workforce to meet a growing demand for its services, while also investing in the families of Clarksville.

The partnership is a part of DRS’ on-going commitment to the communities in which it works, particularly rural communities. This new partnership is a good fit for the rural Virginia community of Clarksville, as Governor Ralph Northam has made rural workforce development a priority. He recently stated at the Governor’s Summit on Rural Prosperity that investing in jobs and workforce development are critical to help the commonwealth’s rural communities thrive.

The first class offering, *Introduction to Business*, has helped DRS employees grow their skills and enhance their productivity, both on the job and off.

Bruce Terry of Clarksville, a 37-year-old DRS employee, enrolled in the class and was recently promoted to production manager. He considered college at one time but, instead, joined the workforce out of high school. The *Introduction to Business* course is allowing Bruce to now revisit his desires to attend college, he said.

“It also allows something that my stepdaughter, a freshman at Old Dominion University, and I can bond over”, he continued.

Shavonne Hargrove, a mother of three and DRS employee, admits, “I was nervous about taking a college class, especially the testing part”. However, she has endeavored to learn business and believes that this class will improve her job performance and increase her personal satisfaction.

Jeanette Rawlings, a floor supervisor, shares that being a college student makes her a role model for her two daughters. “Anything I can do to help my kids, I am going to do,” said Rawlings.

DRS has eleven nationwide offices, and the company has employed Southside Virginians at the local site for over 16 years. DRS CEO Cliff Newman, inspired by his own father’s success as an entrepreneur, has always sought solutions for a more productive and empowered workforce. The partnership with SVCC was, to him, a no-brainer.

"We have hundreds of employees nationwide and we work hard to take care of them," said Newman. "Our employees are our core asset, and by investing in them, we are investing in our business. Giving employees an opportunity to gain college credits towards a diploma helps them and, candidly, is also beneficial to the growth of our business."

Nick Jean-Baptiste, Board Member and an investor in DRS said, "DRS is growing the local community, our employees and our bottom line. Partnering with SVCC enables us to reach these goals."

The classes, which are held in a conference room that was quickly converted into an educational classroom to hold 16 eager students, have exceeded everyone's high expectations. The students love their teacher, Tiffany Slagle, an SVCC Accounting instructor.

"It has been such an amazing experience working with students outside of the traditional college setting and stepping out of my comfort zone," said Slagle. "This in-house training program is such a wonderful opportunity for the employees and I am very excited to be a part of it."

Dr. Chad Patton, SVCC Dean of Career and Occupational Technology, sees this partnership as something that can be replicated by other companies and other community colleges. The partnership, he said, has been a success due to DRS's commitment.

Dr. Patton said, "It has been a pleasure to work with DRS on creating this opportunity. It is obvious the company is dedicated to improving their employee's lives and is willing to make this happen."