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Successful 2024 WaterWORKS Blue Economy Career Day Inspires Students to Pursue Careers in Environment & Energy Innovation

The Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation looks ahead to WaterWORKS 2025 with plans to foster interest among younger students

CENTERVILLE, Mass. (February 7, 2024) – More than 300 local students and exhibitors attended the 2024 WaterWORKS Blue Economy Career Day held January 16 at Cape Cod Community College. The career showcase was sponsored by The Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation, Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce and Cape Cod Regional STEM Network and highlighted the broad array of careers available to both students and adults through demonstrations, exhibits, interactive displays, and hands-on activities.

Various nonprofits, research institutions, government agencies and businesses participated in this year's event, representing employment opportunities in the following areas: aquaculture, boat building and maintenance, climate adaptation, computer modeling, energy, environmental engineering, fishing, marine management, public safety, transportation, and tourism.

The WaterWORKS career day, now entering its fifth year, aims to help coastal communities retain young people with local, well-paying career work in an ongoing effort to promote regional economic health. Given the name of the event, windswept rain was the perfect backdrop as school buses unloaded students from Plymouth County, across the Cape, and those who made the early morning trip from Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

At day's end, one student commented, "Before today, I never knew that I could go into a career field and travel around and get experience." Indeed, internship opportunities are a big part of the connection The Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation works to cultivate between schools and local businesses and nonprofits. One exhibitor answering questions for students at a display booth inside the new Frank and Maureen Wilkens Science Center at Cape Cod

Community College observed, “Many of us began our careers with the student internships that we are promoting.”

WaterWORKS helps bring awareness to the region’s high school students of how our environment and economy are inextricably linked, now more than ever. With an accent on innovation in energy, this year’s opening presentation included remarks from Paul Niedzwiecki, CEO of the Cape Cod Chamber and Blue Economy Foundation.

“Energy is now at the crossroads of our environment and our economy,” said Niedzwiecki. “Offshore wind power, electric technology, smart grid systems... that’s where the work will be in the coming years. The Cape and Islands are positioned perfectly to supply the workforce.”

Katy Acheson, Economic Development Director for The Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation says a goal next year for WaterWORKS will be to engage even younger students. “Creating interest in the options available for career choices early on helps students and parents accent the areas of learning required for such fields,” said Acheson. “There is already a healthy emphasis on STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) learning. To further provide younger students with a tangible goal will help many complete the picture whether they eventually apply to college or plan to directly enter the workforce.”

About The Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation

Launched in 2017 by the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, The Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation leads a regional initiative to promote and sustain a maritime-focused economy on Cape Cod, the islands of Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket, and southern Plymouth County. This effort builds on existing tourism industries, world class marine research and technology nonprofits and sustainable use planning dedicated to preserving our environment and quality of life. The blue economy acknowledges the environment is our economy. It recognizes the vast role water plays in our everyday life, the importance of retaining local talent to strengthen the economy and the necessity of finding a sustainable and symbiotic course for the future.