



## TOHONO O'ODHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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### ***Building a Future: Tohono O'odham Community College's Award-Winning Program Prepares Apprentices For the Building Trades and Other Careers***

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Sells, AZ*—As high school seniors around the state make their plans for life after graduation, Tohono O'odham Community College (TOCC) encourages them to consider continuing their education as apprentices in TOCC's Building Trades Apprenticeship Program.

Last fall, the Arizona Department of Commerce presented Tohono O'odham Community College (TOCC) with the Exemplary Program Award in the category of Rural Community College Training Program. The state presented awards both to TOCC's Apprenticeship Program and to TOCC alumnus Mr. Floyd Manuel, journeyman in facilities maintenance. Mr. Manuel received the Charles R. Huggins Community Service Award and an Outstanding Apprentice Award. The presentations were made at the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual David G. Hollis Outstanding Apprentice Awards Ceremony in Phoenix on November 18, 2006.

**"Apprenticeship is a proven way of teaching in the building trades world, and our program at TOCC is especially strong."**

*– John Bair  
TOCC Instructor  
in Facilities  
Maintenance*

This was the fourth time that the Arizona Department of Commerce has recognized the apprenticeship training program in Sells, Arizona. Mr. John Bair, Facilities Maintenance Instructor, is proud of the program's success: *"This is our life—we work hard to deliver the highest quality of instruction. So it is rewarding to see alumni like Floyd Manuel excel in their studies."* Previous TOCC recipients of the Outstanding Apprentice Award include Painting Instructor Ms. Estella Melendez, Administrative Assistant Ms. Kathleen Miguel, and Carpentry Instructor Mr. Tom Bebo, all of whom are alumni of the program.

Mr. Manuel, now an apprentice in the Electrical program, said, *"The Career Center instructors are very good and patient. I have enrolled in Electrical to learn more before starting my career."*

Formerly known as the Tohono O’odham Nation Career Center, the TOCC Apprenticeship Program currently has forty-two apprentices training in six fields. TOCC offers apprenticeships in carpentry, electrical, facilities maintenance, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), painting, and plumbing.

Apprenticeship is a structured educational approach that combines classroom instruction with on-the-job training. Apprentices must complete years of training and meet specific standards of expertise, in order to achieve the professional grade of journeyman (or journeyperson) status. Only journeypersons may be state-certified and licensed to work in the building trades. Mr. Jose Soto, Electrical Instructor, said that TOCC faculty and apprentices keep up with the most recent technology in their fields: *“We are constantly seeking new knowledge and techniques through the National Center for Construction Education and Research.”*

The Federal government recognizes apprenticeship training for more than 850 occupations. Apprenticeship programs are regulated by the U.S. Department of Labor–Employment & Training Administration. In Arizona, over 3,100 apprentices are training in more than a hundred programs registered with the Arizona Department of Commerce, in industries as varied as agriculture, construction, transportation, and public administration.

**“With all of the construction going on in Southern Arizona, our apprentices can find very attractive positions when they graduate.”**  
– Tom Bebo  
TOCC Instructor  
in Carpentry

Ms. Juana Jose, Vice President of Education at TOCC, explained the significance of the building trades program: *“There are so many opportunities for our apprenticeship students. TOCC’s program provides an excellent foundation for many different career paths. Indeed, the Apprenticeship Program is a key part of the College’s efforts to help develop the Tohono O’odham Nation’s economy.”* Ms. Jose mentioned that the Apprenticeship Program is currently seeking an Instructor of Plumbing and a Department Chair of Occupational Programs. *“TOCC is one of the premier employers in Southern Arizona, and I trust we will find the right individuals to join our award-winning team of apprenticeship instructors,”* she said.

TOCC President Olivia Vanegas-Funcheon said, *“Our apprentices and their instructors are highly committed individuals who contribute to the community in numerous ways. For example, many on-the-job training assignments involve service projects that help people in need. The apprenticeship faculty do an excellent job of preparing their students for a life of learning and service.”*

Mr. Soto described one of his apprentices’ service projects: *“We installed a new electrical service panel to upgrade the Santa Rosa Senior Services Building to accommodate the air conditioning and heating loads. The apprentices provided the material list, helped design the installation, and then did the actual work, all under the watchful eye of their electrical instructor. It is satisfying to think of how the Santa Rosa seniors have benefited from our involvement.”* Santa Rosa is one of many communities in the northern part of the Tohono O’odham Nation.

Apprenticeship training applications are accepted year-round, with tuition and textbook costs covered by the College for successful applicants. For additional information about the Apprenticeship Program, please contact Ms. Kathleen Miguel at **(520) 383-0013**.

The Tohono O’odham Nation chartered and established Tohono O’odham Community College in 1998 to increase access to higher education for its members and to promote economic self-sufficiency. The Tohono O’odham Nation, located sixty miles west of Tucson, has around 28,800 members and a land base of 2.8 million acres (4,460 square miles, roughly the size of Connecticut). TOCC offers classes at more than ten sites across the Tohono O’odham Nation. Non-Apprenticeship programs include associate degrees for transfer and direct employment certificates in areas ranging from Social Services to Computer Software Applications. Preparation classes for the General Equivalency Diploma (the GED) are offered year-round at no charge to students. For more information about all of TOCC’s programs, call (520) 383-8401 or visit the College’s website at **<http://www.tocc.cc.az.us/>**.

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### **Related Websites**

- Tohono O’odham Community College: **<http://www.tocc.cc.az.us/>**
- Arizona Dept. of Commerce Apprenticeship Home Page: **<http://www.azcommerce.com/Workforce/Apprenticeships/>**
- National Center for Construction Education and Research: **<http://www.nccer.org>**
- U.S. Department of Labor – Employment & Training Administration – Office of Apprenticeship: **<http://www.doleta.gov/oa>**