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CCC Veterans Crew Graduates Jan. 20 from Sierra College Energy Training
Veterans go from Serving the Nation to Building Energy Conservation

ROCKLIN – Veterans who served as medics, ammunition specialists and security forces are transitioning to civilian employment as the result of a Sierra College Center for Applied Competitive Technologies (CACT) and California Conservation Corps (CCC) partnership. Nine veterans who are on the CCC crew will be awarded Energy Technology and Lighting Systems Completion Certificates from Sierra College CACT (www.sierracollegeenergytraining.com).

The graduation will be held at the CCC Placer Energy Center at 3710 Christian Valley Road in Auburn at 1:00 PM on Friday, January 20. *(The ceremony includes presentations from some of the graduates and they will be available for interviews after the ceremony.)*

The Energy Technology and Lighting Systems training program developed by Sierra College CACT covers energy systems, electricity, lighting, photovoltaic systems, energy efficiency retrofits and safety. After graduation, they'll work on the only CCC Veterans crew in the state focused on energy efficiency.

Rod Thornhill, center director, CCC Sacramento & Placer, explained that the CCC has a contract agreement with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). "The graduates will do energy lighting retrofits and maintenance throughout DMV's many offices in the state," said Thornhill. Through this work, crew members will gain valuable field experience that is the conduit to highly paid, in-demand local careers. The Sierra College CACT will also provide coaching in resume development, interview skills and job search techniques.

Putting discharged veterans to work is the goal of the program, partially funded by the California State Assembly Speaker's Office according to David Muraki, CCC director. "The training provided by Sierra College CACT, together with the hands-on experience the veterans will get installing energy conservation measures at DMV offices, will give them skills needed to qualify for a good job after the CCC," said Muraki.

Alexandra Warner served in the Army for nearly two years, specializing in ammunitions and special explosives, based in Fort Hood, Texas. Her interest in joining the CCC resulted in discovering the Energy Technology and Lighting Systems program at the CCC's Placer Energy Center. "I didn't know anything about electricity but I was intrigued by solar energy," said Warner. "This program is much more than I expected and

now I have a passion for learning about energy systems, especially solar, and how people can save money.”

Warner also says that as a woman she has no problem keeping up with the men in the class. “This course covers the basics with hands-on practice, so I’d tell others, don’t hesitate about trying it. If you make a mistake while installing electrical wiring and lighting systems in the lab, you learn from it and will be confident doing the work correctly on the job site,” said Warner.

According to Brian Hurd, CACT instructor and president of Hands On Solar Inc., who is co-teaching the class with Aaron Fry of the CCC, the Corps members in this program are gaining skills that prepare them for employment. “Manufacturers, utilities, solar installers, electricians and contractors would benefit from hiring these veterans for entry level electrical repair, maintenance, retrofit and construction positions,” said Hurd. “Their military experience makes them ideal employees as they know how to work as a team, arrive on time, show respect, take instruction and complete the mission.”

Isaac Hall served three years in security forces, stationed at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota, and says that this program is a great opportunity for him. “I’m getting paid to learn and get practical experience through the CCC,” said Hall. “I love what I’m doing and am really glad to be in this program. The teacher is great, the class size is small so you get the attention you need and I like the hands-on lab where you do work like you’d do on the job site. Now I’m looking at the possibility of a career as an electrician.”

For three years, Eric Juhnke was a medic in the Army deployed to Iraq before joining the CCC. He says that he is excited about working in alternative energy. “I have a passion for solar energy and want to help the world move forward in using renewable energy,” said Juhnke. “I’m excited to get into the energy efficiency field just as it is taking off.”

Carol Pepper-Kittredge, director, Sierra College CACT, explained that the partnership with CCC benefits the regional economy. “This program puts veterans to work while they gain electrical skills that are transferable to a variety of careers,” said Pepper-Kittredge. “Businesses become more competitive by employing these skilled Corps members who’ve acquired practical experience through this program. Energy costs are also reduced by retrofitting buildings to make them more efficient.”

The Sierra College CACT is funded through the Economic and Workforce Development program of the California Community College Chancellor’s Office. Since 1992, the Sierra College CACT has provided training for organizations, manufacturers and technology companies throughout Northern California. Additional information is available at sierracollege training.com or contact Carol Pepper-Kittredge at 916-660-7517 or cpepper-kittredge@sierracollege.edu. Contact the CCC at www.ccc.ca.gov.

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PHOTOS available

- 553 - Aaron Fry, CCC instructor, discusses installation of a ceramic base lamp holder with Joshua Diadiw.
- 540 – Alexandra Warner does wire stripping for installing an exterior light.
- 534 – Antoine Turner practices wiring an interior light fixture.
- 508 – Isaac Hall-Cloninger gets experience setting a ground wire.
- 472 – Eric Juhnke wiring an outlet.