

# NEWS RELEASE

*October 15, 2015*

## DED celebrates Grundy County achieving Certified Work Ready Community designation

**TRENTON** — The Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED) today announced that Grundy County has been designated as Missouri’s newest **Certified Work Ready Community** (CWRC). The CWRC designation recognizes successful efforts by community, education and business leaders, working with the Missouri Division of Workforce Development, to strengthen workforce training and development to meet the economic development needs of communities.

“A skilled workforce is essential to building a strong economy, and I congratulate Grundy County on its dedication to connecting local talent with employer needs in order to maximize its economic potential,” said **Mike Downing**, director of the Missouri Department of Economic Development. “It’s great to see the Certified Work Ready Community initiative becoming a focal point for communities looking to grow and create a work-ready workforce.”

The announcement of the designation was made at the Barton Agricultural Farm Campus at North Central Missouri College, a supporter of Grundy County’s CWRC efforts. Several local companies that utilize the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) in their hiring process or internal capacity were present at the event, including Green Hills Animal Nutrition, Inc., a new Trenton company that plans to use NCRC to assist in hiring up to 40 new employees over the next several years. The NCRC is a work-related skills credential, providing objective documentation of an individual’s skills that is accepted nationwide by many employers.

In 2012, Missouri was selected as one of the first four states to participate in the Certified Work Ready Communities initiative by American College Testing (ACT). The initiative aligns workforce training programs with the economic development needs of communities; matches appropriate applicants to jobs based on skill level; and strengthens businesses by strengthening the workforce. In 2013, Jasper County, Missouri was named the first Certified Work Ready Community in the nation. Missouri now has 64 counties that are actively participating in the Certified Work Ready Community initiative and 18 fully certified counties.

“This designation is a great achievement for our community, and a true testament to the partnership among our local supporters,” said Ralph Boots, Community Development Director for the City of Trenton. “From meeting with area high schools to promotion in the local media to hosting a three-day testing event to achieve our final goal, we are excited to join the ranks of Missouri’s certified counties and look forward to the benefits it will afford our business community.”

Several local employers and organizations, including local school districts, educational institutions, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations, came together to promote and support Grundy County's efforts to achieve this important certification. By participating in ACT's Certified Work Ready Communities initiative, Grundy County is:

- Helping workers understand what skills are required by employers, and how to prepare themselves for success;
- Helping businesses effectively communicate their workforce needs to area education and workforce training programs;
- Providing educators with the tools needed to close the skills gap by establishing career pathways for students with stackable industry-recognized credentials; and
- Equipping economic development organizations with an on-demand reporting tool to promote the quality of their workforce.

For more information about Missouri Works Training or the Certified Work Ready Community initiative and how to apply for certification, visit [MO.gov](https://www.mo.gov).

Photo: Group receiving proclamation.

From left to right: Travis Elbert-Trenton City Councilman Third Ward; Cheryl Fredricks-Missouri Career Center; Dr. Neil Nuttall-President North Central Missouri College; Ralph Boots-Trenton Community Developer; Mike Downing Director for Missouri Department of Economic Development; Gary Jordan CEO Wright Memorial Hospital; Dan Wiebers-Superintendent Trenton R-IX School District; Lisa Hostetler-Executive Director for Workforce Development Board