

Education NEWS & NOTES

America's Workforce Crisis: Skills Lacking—Not Jobs

by Kathy Jo Elliott,

President, Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE)

(NAPSA)—Help wanted: Mil-

lions of jobs remain unfilled due to a shortage of properly trained candidates—jobs offering excellent pay, challenging work and exciting potential for advancement. Some statistics:

- Information technology firms need 425,000 additional workers now—and more than 1.2 million by 2005.

- The automotive industry reports that 60,000 service technician jobs are unfilled.

- Some 22,000 installation, repair and service jobs in the air conditioning and refrigeration field are empty.

- The construction industry reports over 250,000 openings.

- Eighty percent of employers in the hospitality, healthcare, printing, transportation and manufacturing industries claim moderate to severe shortages.

What's needed: Candidates trained in technical skills and “employability” skills: an understanding of punctuality, the ability to work as part of a team and sound written and oral communication skills. That's the mission of the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE). It's the largest national education association dedicated to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for a wide range of careers. Programs are offered as early as middle school, as well as in high schools, two-year community



Career and technical education prepares youth and adults for a wide range of careers.

and technical colleges and other post-secondary schools.

A New York study of 76,000 secondary career and technical education graduates found that six to 18 months after graduation, 91 percent were productively employed, in the military or enrolled in post-secondary education.

We must expand the secondary and post-secondary programs that prepare students for the high-skill, high-wage jobs our economy depends on. These diverse, challenging programs introduce a “real world” experience that connects classroom instruction to the practical job environment.

The result: motivated students, high-performance employees and successful, competitive companies. To learn more about career and technical education, visit www.getcareerskills.com.