

## HERMITAGE

# Classes teach green building skills

## *Contractors learn new techniques*

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By Joe Pinchot, *Herald Staff Writer*

As the building of the technology center in Linden- Pointe technical business park shows, green building is coming to Mercer County. Contractors will need to learn new techniques and regulations in order to meet the evolving standards and\ customer demands for environmentally friendly construction.

“With the growing green economy, there’s such a need for these skills,” said Rebecca Moder, workforce development manager for West Central Job Partnership, which serves Mercer and Lawrence counties.



Jason Kapusta/Herald

*A man works on the technology center at LindenPointe technical business park in Hermitage. The center is being built using “green” construction techniques and materials.*

Fifty-four contractors, architects, construction trades people and others were recognized May 10 for participating in one or more of the four classes held in October through January that dealt with green building. The classes covered the fundamentals of green building, building codes, products and certification. The sessions were held at the Hermitage Training and Workforce Development Center, which is next door to the under-construction tech center. “They gave us very reasonable rents,” quipped Ms. Moder. “It’s a nice facility.” The contractors building the tech center were required to attend the classes, said Assistant City Manager Gary M. Gulla.

“The immediate benefit to us is the workers working on the project better understand the LEED components,” he said. LEED is an acronym for the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program, which sets the criteria for certification of green buildings. The program takes into account elements such as site location, storm water management, wastewater handling and building materials. If LEED certifies the tech center, it will be the first LEED-certified building in Mercer County.

The courses were open to other construction-related professionals. Six Hickory High School students who have been blogging about the progress of tech center construction also attended. “We have to be careful for the future of the environment, and the future is our kids,” said John Tkach, program manager for SkillUp: Building & Construction Industry Partnership, Pittsburgh, speaking of the students’ participation.

The classes were funded by federal stimulus funds given to SkillUp after local contractors and building professional identified green building practices as something they want to know more about, Tkach said.

SkillUp is part of Keystone Development Partnership, a non-profit affiliate of the AFLCIO. It brought together West Central, Hermitage officials, the Green Building Alliance, which taught the courses, and the state Department of Labor and Industry, to make the classes possible, Tkach said.

The Green Building Alliance also consulted on the design of the tech center. SkillUp has been holding training sessions on removing lead-based paint, and has a course on storm water management planned for June 7 at the workforce building.

Tkach said more green building classes could be in the offing. "We ran it during the day and we're thinking about running it during the evening," he said. "There were more contractors who were unable to attend."

*Information: [www.SkillUp-Careers.com](http://www.SkillUp-Careers.com)*