LenapeTech
Education at Work

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Lenape Tech Highway Workforce Grant Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lenape Tech Awarded $402,000 PennDOT Grant to Launch Heavy Highway Construction Inspection Pathway

New program will train high school and adult students for in-demand highway inspection careers in Armstrong County and beyond

FORD CITY, PA (October 27, 2026) — Lenape Technical School has been awarded $402,000 by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education to launch *The Road More Traveled: Creating Skilled Labor for Pennsylvania's Heavy Highway Needs*, a new Heavy Highway Industry pathway within its Construction Trades program. Lenape Tech is one of 27 schools in 21 counties funded in the first round of the PennDOT Career and Technical Education (CTE) Grant Program, which awarded nearly $12 million statewide.

"Our region is about to see some of the busiest years of road and bridge work in a generation, and the people who inspect that work are in short supply," said Wesley Kuchta, Administrative Director of Lenape Technical School. "This grant lets our students earn the credentials PennDOT and its contractors are looking for, and walk out of Lenape Tech ready for an in demand career that will greatly impact our own communities."

A Big Impact on a Local and State Need

PennDOT ranks construction inspection among its most serious workforce gaps, and the occupation is on the state's High Priority Occupation list for Armstrong, Butler, and Indiana counties. Starting pay for Transportation Construction Inspectors in Pennsylvania runs about $20 to $35 per hour.

The need is close to home. PennDOT Engineering District 10, which includes Armstrong County, maintains 7,117 lane miles and 1,624 bridges, and its 2026 season includes 64 construction projects and about $160 million in newly announced road and bridge work.

The Road More Traveled Program

High school and adult evening students will complete PennDOT's 138-hour Transportation Construction Inspection curriculum, preparing them to advance as inspector trainees. Along the way they will earn industry certifications such as, PennDOT LTAP Flagger, NCCER Core and Heavy Highway credentials. Adult and post-secondary participants can also earn ACI Concrete Field Testing Technician Grade I and NICET Level I certifications.

Students will visit active construction sites, spend a full day shadowing a working inspector, and learn from practicing inspectors who serve as guest instructors. Eligible students and adults will also have access to paid summer internships and cooperative education placements with inspection firms and highway contractors.

"Programs like this turn education into opportunity," said Wesley Kuchta, Administrative Director. "Our students will leave with the credentials, experience, and professional connections to step directly into rewarding careers."

The PennDOT CTE Grant Program is funded with federal highway dollars under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and grew out of Governor Josh Shapiro's 2023 executive order creating the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program. The full list of recipients is available from PennDOT.

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