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### Hurricane Katrina Can't Stand Up to PTEC Power



Hurricane Katrina left Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC) and its three main campuses with \$17 million in damage. Fortunately, the PTEC building had no damage, although other parts of the campus were not so lucky. The college administration felt it was important to

return some aspect of student's lives back to normal – and having the classrooms available to them was what could be done. As a result, the college was up and running with students in the classrooms 17 days after the hurricane.

Enrollment for Process Technology actually increased after Katrina. MGCCC extended registration, starting all over again with classes and late registration and picked up a few students whose lives had changed as a result of the hurricane. A couple of new PTEC students had jobs that were completely gone or diminished and saw this an opportunity to start over.

Maggie Caplin was one of these students. Her place of employment had closed and she wanted a completely different career. Maggie attended a non-traditional women's job fair where Tommie Ann Broome, the PTEC instructor at MGCCC, was the keynote speaker. Tommie's excitement about the program and career was contagious. Within a couple of weeks Maggie signed up for the program.

Unfortunately Maggie had no place to live since her home was heavily damaged by Katrina, so Tommie opened her home to Maggie, making it possible for her to go back to school. Maggie stays with Tommie during holidays and the summer and in the college dorms when they are open. She is now a 4.0 honors student in her second year of the PTEC program and anticipates having an end-of-the-year internship with a local company.

Tommie did what she could to help Katrina victims, even though she suffered losses as well. But she wasn't alone in helping. Tommie says, "One thing that has impressed many of the PTEC students is how major corporations provided and cared for their employees after Katrina. My

students know that once they are employed, they will have security and benefits beyond just wages."

According to Tommie, "The plant manager from one of the BP installations in Louisiana told students about setting up immediate help lines and providing financial grants in addition to the FEMA grants for employees to have temporary housing. BP also made some low-interest loans available that provided for immediate needs like ice and water. The company even provided gasoline so employees could get to work and home."

Tommie says "The local Chevron facility built a tent city with phones and computers for employees and families. Katrina hit the day before the new hires were supposed to start safety training on the unit. All 22 new hires passed out ice, cut trees in employee's yards, delivered food baskets, etc., and earned regular pay until each could have their training."

"Mississippi Power built a huge temporary housing facility at the power plant. Every affected employee had a roof over their head, hot meals, showers, phones, and email facilities so employees could take care of personal business."

Another of Tommie's students had interned with Shell over the summer and was evacuated off the platform for Katrina. After the storm, Tommie says, "Shell couldn't reach him by phone and came and checked on him, treating him like an employee, making the same offers of additional funds, and other amenities that they offered their employees."

DuPont in Bay St. Louis had a 30-foot high storm surge that hit their facility. Tommie says, "DuPont had travel trailers set up for their employees to live in, even though it took them 5 months to get back online."

A special thanks to all of our industry partners in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas who provided similar assistance after hurricanes Katrina and Rita.



Tommie Ann Broome (Left) and Maggie Caplin (Right)

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### A PTEC Student's Success Story



Originally, Erica DuShane enrolled in the computer program at Texas State Technical College in Marshall, TX, and never considered becoming a process technician, until she spoke with instructors in the Process Technology (PTECTM) department. She remembers, "I was interested in a career outside of the traditional female occupations, but thought only men could be process technicians because the work was too hard for women."

One of her instructors, Robert Smith, explained that women were successfully entering the PTEC field, which now relies on high technology to monitor the processes and less physical labor. He convinced Erica to change her degree plan. "I believed that she was extremely capable and could become a very competent process technician. Erica was an outstanding student, frequently making the highest grade on exams. During her last semester, she received a co-op at Eastman

Chemical that went very well, and she was offered a job."

Erica wanted to work at Eastman, and knew she might easily have studied to be a lab technician, a career that women often choose. "Surprisingly, as a process operator working shifts," Erica says, "I actually get more time with my son and certainly earn more than I would have in the lab. Since I'm off seven days in a row every month, I don't have to take time off for car repairs or doctor appointments. And I never have to work more than four days at a time."

In addition to time off, Erica receives other benefits from her new career. "I'm always learning something new, just about every day. I completed my on-the-job training faster because of my degree and I've had two "double" raises as a result. It really helped to get the basics out of the way in college."



## Add an Essential Piece to Your PTEC Program Start a PTEC Club

Having a PTEC Club provides a valuable resource for students. It can give you career information beyond the classroom, especially if plant tours are included in club activities.

PTEC club members meet process technicians during these tours, and see what the different refineries are like. Ideally, they will be able to visit different plants, and learn about hiring and internship opportunities. Through plant tours, students learn about the process technology career while still in school, making what they are learning in class more tangible.

The PTEC Club at Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT) in Beaumont, TX has been established for several years. For this article, a former officer describes the LIT PTEC Club and provides recommendations for anyone who wants to start up a club at their own institution.

- A PTEC Club can be started without teachers, but it is better to have the support of at least one faculty member, especially to set up plant tours. Having an industry champion to work with the club, especially with setting up tours and providing job information, is valuable.
- At LIT, the college advisors and job placement coordinators told the students that officer elections were coming up soon. A group of students attended the elections and by a simple show of hands, the officers were elected. Officers include the President,

Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Secretary.

- The LIT PTEC Club has meetings two days a week on Wednesday and Thursday so everyone can attend a meeting, whatever their class schedule. Students conduct the club meetings and charge new members five dollars to join, with no dues. The club meetings are held in one of the PTEC classrooms and last about 30 minutes. At each meeting students exchange hiring information, talk about possible plant tours, and make plans. Most students learn about job openings in the newspaper, through Texas Workforce, and from instructors, and exchange this information at the meetings.
- To pay for gas, meals, and hotels, the LIT club members have held a B-B-Q cook-off and a car wash to raise money. For their B-B-Q, donations from a local grocery and proceeds from the cook-off provided \$300 for a trip. One company that they toured helped with student expenses, picking up the cost of hotel rooms, dinner the night before the tour, and providing lunch at their facility on the day of the tour.

If your college is interested in starting a PTEC Club, contact Joanna Perkins at [jperkins@com.edu](mailto:jperkins@com.edu).

## Interns Share Keys to a Successful Internship

Students enrolled in, or graduates from, a two-year Process Technology (PTEC™) or Instrumentation degree program can apply for paid student internships with BP Exploration and Production or Shell Oil Company. Onshore and offshore internships are offered periodically throughout the year.

When interns from last summer were asked what students should do to be prepared for an internship experience, they relayed the following:

1. Begin your internship with an open mind and take full advantage of every opportunity that is given to you.
2. Learn as much as possible before your internship, and be prepared to listen and observe.
3. Take an interpersonal communications class to make you aware of your own responsibilities in good communication.
4. Research the company you will intern with – know what the job you will train for involves and prepare for the specific internship location.
5. Prepare to work hard and to learn a lot.

If you are interested in an internship, please read the *Internship Guide for PTEC Students* ([www.capttech.org/press/intern\\_guide.pdf](http://www.capttech.org/press/intern_guide.pdf)) for a better understanding of what an internship involves.

## Inquiring minds want to hear from you

- What are the top 5 most challenging concepts that you've had to learn in class? CAPT will develop podcast lectures of the most difficult concepts for you to understand.
- Who was (is) your favorite instructor and why? We'll profile an instructor in an upcoming newsletter.
- What is your favorite way for us to communicate with you? Email, phone, mail, blogs, podcasts, website?

To respond please visit [www.com.edu](http://www.com.edu)

## Have You Got Your PTEC™ Gear?

Visit the Online Store at [www.capstore.org](http://www.capstore.org) and see what is available.

- Denim shirts • Polo shirts • Umbrellas  
• Auto sunshades • and more

## PTEC Jobs – Industry Says...

According to the American Petroleum Institute, the current United States drilling pace is at an all-time high, with drilling activity the greatest it has been for 21 years<sup>1</sup>. Some of the newest areas under development include the Rocky Mountain region and the northern section of central Texas.

The offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico also has entered a period of tremendous growth. Recent advances in technology have enabled companies to develop deepwater fields that were previously inaccessible. Some believe the ability to extract oil from these depths could provide recoverable oil in amounts that recall the opening of the Alaska pipeline, a potential of billions of barrels<sup>2</sup>.

These projects will require additional manpower in exploration and production and to operate and maintain production facilities. Over the past twenty years there has been a hiring gap in the petrochemical industries as new graduates were increasingly attracted to other professions. This has created a workforce shortage that is compounded by impending retirements. With the average age of the current technician approaching 50 years, estimates reveal that at least 40 percent of the current workforce will retire in the next 10 years, creating an additional demand for skilled employees.

According to Monte King, Shell's Manager of Workforce Development, there will be hundreds of intern and full-time job openings for upstream oil and gas, including offshore Gulf of Mexico, onshore in Texas and the Rockies, and in Alaska. Also, Shell's downstream segment, which includes its refineries and chemical plants, is projecting significant demand for skilled/trained process technicians.

King says, "As America recognizes the need to produce more of its own energy sources, I foresee substantial job growth in each of these areas. In my opinion, graduates from a two-year PTEC™ program, will be well prepared and in high demand to fill these jobs. Their training will become the ticket for not only entry level jobs but also will serve as a strong foundation for leadership roles as their experience grows."

Chevron is another company making an aggressive effort to hire and retain employees to meet their current and future needs. They see the need for 100 plus per year in their upstream offshore operations, and plan to recruit heavily from colleges that offer the PTEC degree program.

D. B. Smith, Operations Trainer for Chevron Global Technology Services Company says,



## Looking for a Job?

Students and graduates looking for process technology jobs in the CAPT Job Bank this week discovered Shell Oil is looking for Spring 2007 offshore and onshore operations technical internships and that Suncor Energy USA is hiring process operators. Unlike other job sites that allow postings from all types of companies in a range of fields, the CAPT Job Bank will post job openings exclusively in the process industries.

The CAPT Job Bank matches qualified job seekers with companies in a wide range of process industries, such as:

- Oil and gas
- Chemical
- Food and beverage
- Power generation
- Water and waste water treatment
- Pulp and paper
- Mining
- Pharmaceutical

Job seekers earning their PTEC degrees or graduates can register for a user ID and password at [www.capttech.org/jobbank](http://www.capttech.org/jobbank). Job seekers must enter their institution and graduation date (projected or actual) to qualify.

Once approved, a job seeker can post a resume using any standard format (MS Word, Adobe Acrobat, or text file). Employers can search the posted resumes and contact job seekers about available positions.

Job seekers can also specify the industry type, region/state, and other criteria, and then do a search for available jobs. New jobs will be posted often, so job seekers should regularly check the site.

"The opportunities for a new employee are outstanding in today's oil and gas industry. A new employee can expect a high paying and rewarding career working with the latest technology. Most offshore facilities are heavily automated and require a degree of skill to operate and maintain. Our process technicians manage and run million dollar facilities providing a vital resource to this country."

Smith says, "Students with an Associate Degree in Process Technology require less training time and are quick to pick up on policies and procedures which make them a more productive employee in a shorter period of time. We will continue to support and recruit from schools offering this degree as the need for top talent has never been greater."

<sup>1</sup> American Petroleum Institute, "Estimated U.S. drilling activity hits 21-year high." API Quarterly Well Completion Report press release, 20 October, 2006 <<http://www.api.org/Newsroom/q3drilling2006.cfm>>

<sup>2</sup> Energy Information Administration, "Annual Energy Outlook 2006 with Projections to 2030." Report #:DOE/EIA-0383(2006), February 2006 <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/oi/a/aeo/>>.

"While current process technology programs have about 800 graduates each year, my belief is that industry will be needing two to three times that number of graduates annually within the next five years."

Monte King, Shell  
Manager Workforce  
Development