

Kentucky Tech applauds Governor Beshear's announcement of Microsoft® Elevate America Partnership and embraces the possibilities



Photo (l to r): Joe Morgan, OCTE branch manager, IT curriculum, distance learning, & professional support; Joseph U. Meyer, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet acting secretary; Angela Barker, Montgomery County Area Technology Center office technology instructor; Governor Steven L. Beshear; Michael Kindred, OCTE deputy executive director; Gail Thomas-Flynn, Microsoft vice president of State and Local Government; and Siegfried Behrens, Microsoft general manager of U.S. Education.

On Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2010 Governor Steven L. Beshear officially launched Kentucky's involvement in the Microsoft® Elevate America program during a press conference in Frankfort. The major purpose is to present individuals looking for employment with a no-cost opportunity to increase their marketable technology skills. As part of this public-private partnership, Microsoft® provided 20,250 vouchers for online training and certification through Kentucky's Office of Employment and Training, an agency of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet (9,000 vouchers for online training, 9,000 vouchers for online testing and 2,250 vouchers for more advanced training courses).



“In this knowledge-based economy, computer skills are essential to the progression of any profession,” said Gov. Beshear. “This initiative will not only assist job seekers who are looking to retool their skill sets to compete for higher-skilled, higher-paying jobs, but it will also ensure Kentucky’s 21st century workforce continues to meet the needs of new and existing businesses.”

*Governor Steve Beshear during Wednesday's announcement
the at Paul Sawyer Public Library in Frankfort.*

While Gov. Beshear has reserved the first distribution of vouchers for unemployed workers across the state, Kentucky Tech staff members attending the event were supportive of the partnership effort and "will actively promote the program throughout the system's 54 area technology centers," said Office of Career and Technical Education Deputy Executive Director Mike Kindred.

Angela Barker, Montgomery County Area Technology Center office technology instructor, was present during the kick-off celebration and believes Gov. Beshear and Microsoft® are on the right track with this program.

Barker:

"A large number of our Kentucky Tech students enter the workforce directly after graduating from high school. Achieving Microsoft® Certified Application Specialists (MCAS) increases the students competitiveness in the job market by proving they have the skills to succeed in the workforce.

"Microsoft® Elevate America is very exciting and we plan to take advantage of the program for our students. Montgomery Co. ATC office technology students have been participating in Microsoft certification since 2005. I'm pleased to report that our students have had a 100 percent passing rate since 2006. Our students definitely understand the importance of achieving this very sought after certification. Quite frankly, we are excited about this wonderful opportunity and appreciate the work of Governor Beshear and Microsoft in making this program available in Kentucky."



(l to r): Barker, Gov. Beshear and Kindred

Joe Morgan:

"The Elevate America program is a valuable opportunity for our business and information technology (IT) students. They will have access to Microsoft's current business and information technology training materials at no cost for the next year. In addition, they will be able to complete free certification exams that test their business productivity skills using Microsoft application software during the spring 2010 semester.

"These credentials will be a huge advantage when applying for jobs and entering post-secondary studies.

Students can receive post-secondary credit from several Kentucky colleges and universities based solely on whether they pass the Microsoft certification exams. In these times of budgetary constraint, Governor Beshear and Microsoft should be commended for their efforts to offset the cost of providing high-skill training to individuals in the commonwealth."



The most important point for Kentucky Tech business and office, and information technology instructors to remember is vouchers will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis once the first distribution for unemployed workers has been completed. *Apply immediately.*

According to Morgan, teachers who request test vouchers for themselves and students between now and the April 27 deadline must also take the test by that date. So, if you get your voucher on April 27, you will have to take the test that same day. “It’s Microsoft’s rule,” said Morgan. On the other hand, training vouchers grant access to the online training for one full year. *Know the difference and— apply now!*

For more information on how to obtain a voucher and to view a list of testing sites, visit the state’s Web portal <https://kylevateamerica.ky.gov/>. For Kentucky Tech instructors who have questions, contact Joe Morgan at JoeH.Morgan@ky.gov.

Good News Flash #308

By: Fran Dundon, Office of Career and Technical Education
Education and Workforce Development Cabinet
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(l to r): Barker, Morgan, Beth Brinly, newly appointed commissioner of the Department of Workforce Investment, and Kindred.

Brinly:

“On behalf of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, I want to congratulate all of our agencies on their attention to this program and the positive outcomes we expect as a result of their efforts in working with Microsoft’s Elevate America initiative.”

“We all appreciate the hard work of Governor Beshear and Microsoft in forming this public-private partnership. And, Kentucky Tech teachers and students will undoubtedly benefit from this outstanding opportunity.”