



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Glades area residents to be trained for Everglades restoration and construction boom**

### **Palm Beach Community College receives \$1.5 million federal grant to alleviate construction skills shortage**

(Dec. 16, 2005 – Belle Glade, FL) Palm Beach Community College has received a Department of Labor grant to support the construction needs of South Florida. The \$1.5 million U.S. DOL grant will build upon the South Florida Water Management District's Acceler8 initiative to expedite critical Everglades restoration projects.

PBCC will establish a Glades Area Construction Institute at its Belle Glade location in 2006, targeting Glades area residents who have been or will be displaced by closing farms, natural disasters and Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Projects, as well as the unemployed and underemployed residents and area youths entering the work force. With residential construction moving westward, those trained workers can expect long-term employment opportunities.

The College plans to train 460 individuals during the three-year grant period in the fundamentals of building construction, trade apprenticeships, diesel mechanics, welding technology and architectural drafting.

PBCC at Belle Glade will renovate an instructional space and hire additional faculty for the Construction Skills on Demand program. PBCC will use the \$1.5 million awarded as seed money and intends to continue offering the program beyond the initial three years. The College has collaborated with local organizations and agencies to provide additional services and resources, creating partnerships that

will share in the fiscal responsibilities, allowing eligible students to attend classes at minimal cost.

Those partners include the South Florida Water Management District, the Palm Beach County School District (through dual enrollment and the "Tools for Success" construction program), the Palm Beach County Education Commission, the Workforce Alliance, Inc., the Business Development Board, the National Association of Women in Construction, the Gold Coast Builders Association, Harddrivers, Inc., the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Tri-Cities League, the Tri-Cities Ministerial Alliance and Palm Beach County Farmworker Jobs and Education. Each partner has a vested interest in the program's success.

"This project is a win-win for everyone," said Dennis Gallon, PBCC President. "The grant will make it possible for the College to expand its workforce training capacity. Contractors will gain access to a skilled labor force, and our Glades area residents will have meaningful employment opportunities that will provide them with economic stability."

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