

Salem Community College

Environmentally friendly glass center will use landfill methane gas

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When the Salem Community College Glass Education Center opens in 2008, it will become only the second East Coast glass facility to use methane gas from a landfill to create glass objects ranging from scientific apparatus to works of art.

At a groundbreaking ceremony on Oct. 23 at the Salem County Utilities Authority (SCUA), over 150 individuals gathered to celebrate the unique partnership among Salem Community College, the Salem County Utilities Authority, Marina Energy and DCO Energy known as "Gas to Glass."

Citing how the project evolved from a concept to reality, SCUA Executive Director Michael P. Chapman said, "It is a unique set of circumstances and opportunities."

Marina Energy will build a facility on the SCUA grounds in Alloway to recover landfill methane as an energy source then pipe it to the Glass Education Center at the corner of Route 540 and McKillip Road, according to DCO Energy Vice President of Development Frederick J. Eckert. A typical landfill collects methane and burns it off in a flare to reduce odors and buildup of the gas.

The SCUA will spend \$2 million to construct the glass center and develop the site, according to Chapman.

Chapman credited former SCUA chair Sam Jones and world-renowned glass artist Paul J. Stankard, an SCC distinguished alumnus, for championing the viability of using methane gas for educational purposes.

SCC President Peter B. Contini acknowledged Jones, who also chairs the SCC Foundation board, for his recent \$532,000 gift to the SCC Foundation for helping outfit the building scheduled to open in September. "He is a man of vision and a man of action," said Contini.

Contini praised Stankard for helping create the vision for expanded programming that will be possible through the 14,000-square-foot facility, nearly triple the size of the College's current Glass Center. In addition to the associate degree programs in scientific glass technology and glass art, SCC will offer continuing education programs for professional scientific glass technologists and artists. Noncredit glass courses for personal enrichment for youth and adults also will be regularly scheduled.



On October 23, officials celebrated the ceremonial groundbreaking of the Salem Community College (SCC) Glass Education Center on the grounds of the Salem County Utilities Authority (SCUA) in Alloway. From left: SCUA Executive Director Michael P. Chapman; SCC President Dr. Peter B. Contini; SCC Board of Trustees Chair Dorothy Hall; SCUA Board Chair John F. Hall, II; Salem County Freeholder Director Lee R. Ware; South Jersey Industries Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer Edward J. Graham; DCO Energy LLC Vice President Frederick J. Eckert P.E.; and SCC Foundation Chair and former SCUA Chair Sam Jones, whose recent \$532,000 gift to the SCC Foundation will help outfit the building.

The College President shared the special theme that emerged during the planning stages: "The Three E's" -- education, environment and economic development. "We will deliver on the three E's," he said.

Freeholder Director Lee Ware praised the partnership, saying it "combines ingenuity with hard work." He predicted that using the methane gas as a renewable energy source will have "a tremendous impact on protecting our environment."

The location of the glass education center will be historically significant, Chapman pointed out. Alloway was the home of the nation's first successful glass company - Wistarburg - founded in 1739.

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