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## **OC Electrical/Electronics program's space limitations, needs for updated instructional labs growing with industry workforce demands**

ODESSA (Sept. 15, 2010) – It is a career field that could take you anywhere and the need for those with these skills exists in virtually every segment of society, which is why Odessa College is seeing a growing enrollment in its electrical/electronics program.

With the economic downturn, Danny Bailey, OC chair of industrial technology and electrical/electronics technology professor, said he is seeing more and more students coming to Odessa College looking for new skills and to update their existing skill set.

“Job opportunities in the electrical/electronics field range from being an electrical contractor who wires houses, apartments or commercial buildings to working in the cellular phone industry, oil and gas industry, education, government, helping develop bank security systems, repairing MRI machines or the alternative ‘green’ energy industry,” he said.

The electrical/electronics program has an advisory board and communicates with business and industry to research the current workforce demands, and the feedback is that students need to train in facilities that match the real world, according to Dr. Tanya Hughes, OC chief of staff.

“The real concern is that the electrical/electronics instructional lab is out-of-date and does not match what students will see in the work place,” she said.

Also, as Odessa College’s enrollment continues to grow across the board it is forcing programs like electrical/electronics and mathematics to have to share classroom space thus limiting when and what time classes can be offered, Bailey added.

Additionally, Odessa College is offering additional electrical/electronics related programs like the new wind technology program and the upcoming instrumentation program. “Both of these programs incorporate many of the core courses from the electrical/electronics program,” Bailey said. “We already are seeing increased enrollment with the wind technology program and expect continued growth once the instrumentation program is in place in the spring.”

“Ultimately, this means labs and classrooms must be updated if we are going to be responsive to the needs of the increasing number of students looking for a local and economical option for career, technical and college educational opportunities like those OC is offering through it’s electrical/electronics programs,” Hughes said.

“When it comes to a company making a hiring decision, it will take into consideration someone who has the basic skills over someone with no training,” Bailey said. “Having a degree or certification definitely makes a person more marketable and is a great résumé builder. So we are going to continue to see the demand for educational opportunities grow in the electrical/electronics program at Odessa College.”