



JIM DINO/Standard Speaker

UGI Utilities Inc. is contributing \$1,000 to the Greater Hazleton Civic Partnership's Scholarship program. On hand for the presentation are, from left: Joe Yannuzzi, secretary; Larry Crawford, treasurer; Millie Beach, UGI Utilities; Jack St. Pierre, chairman of the scholarship committee; Bob Skulsky, executive director; Terry Bauder, chairwoman, and Donna Palermo, vice chairwoman.

Partnership takes education effort on the road

By JIM DINO

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The Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership's effort to create educational opportunities for people who want to stay in the area after receiving their education is going back on the road in early 2003.

Teams from the Partnership's Scholarship Committee will be visiting area businesses and industries looking for donations to fund the program.

Jack St. Pierre, chairman of the committee, said the business and industrial community has responded, some to pleas for funds to create scholarships for local students who pledge to remain in this area and three years after graduation.

St. Pierre said the aim of the committee is to make the fund endow itself - in c

words, have enough money that it can be invested, and be self-sustaining - as well as offering more than one scholarship per year.

This way, the committee will not have to continually ask the business community for donations.

The program is being offered to provide funds for students who "demonstrate a sincere desire to return to the greater Hazleton area to begin

their employment careers," and asks the applicant to sign a contract that the applicant will remain in the Hazleton area for three years.

St. Pierre said the purpose of the program is important, not only to employers looking

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for workers with specific skills, but also to keeping the area's young people in the area after completing their education.

Those eligible for a scholarship must be pursuing a degree or certification in a two- or four-year accredited program of study.

The committee wants to assist students who are pursuing an education in a field in which there are job opportunities available in the Hazleton area.

St. Pierre said it's going to take time for the scholarship program to take root in the local workforce. He said the job market still has needs potential students can fill.

Some of the typical two-year programs include industrial maintenance technician, manufacturing technology, electronics technology, computer technology and industrial technology.

Typical four-year programs include computer engineering, manufacturing engineering and production technology.

Some potential careers available in the Hazleton area include the following two-year programs: industrial maintenance technician, manufacturing technology, electronics technology, computer technology and industrial technology.

Some typical four-year programs for which there are local job opportunities include computer engineering, manufacturing engineering and production technology.

Typical job functions in

these fields would include service, troubleshooting, and repair or sophisticated manufacturing machinery and systems, installing of manufacturing systems, many of which are computer-operated and overall preventative maintenance.

Candidates with strong hands-on mechanical aptitude, and good analytical and problem-solving skills would be ideally suited for these careers.

Candidates must reside within the boundaries of the Hazleton Area School District or Weatherly Area School District, must achieve a minimum 2.75 grade-point average, must demonstrate employability and the desire to satisfy local employer needs.

Candidates must also demonstrate a sincere desire to return to the Hazleton area to begin their employment careers.

They must sign a contract with the Partnership to remain in the area for three years after graduation.

The program offers scholarships of \$3,000 per year,

renewable for two years, to any student taking a course in a field where there are jobs available in this area.

The scholarship winner and applicants may also be eligible for scholarships through the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, the New Technology Scholarship Program, the GI Bill for New Economy, and SciTech Scholars program.

For further information, contact the Partnership at 455-1508 or a high school guidance counselor.

Earning potential in the Hazleton area for these degrees ranges between \$25,000 and \$70,000 a year, depending upon knowledge and experience level.

St. Pierre said jobs available in those fields are paying up to \$15 per hour.

The scholarship, or scholarships, are awarded each June.

Those interested in applying can contact the Partnership's executive director, Bob Skulsky, at the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce office at 455-1508, or on the Internet at www.hazleton-chamber.org.