

## AROUND THE REGION

# HCC secures grant to create hotel training lab

HOLYOKE - Holyoke Community College has secured a \$35,000 grant to establish a hotel training lab on the second floor of the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute.

The award, announced by Gov. Charlie Baker and other administration officials, comes from the Massachusetts Skills Capital Grant Program, which funds the purchase of new equipment for educational initiatives linked to workforce needs.

The lab will be set up like a hotel reception area with front desk and adjoining guest room and equipped with the most up-to-date technology and software. It will be used for non-credit workforce training programs as well as credit-based associate degree and certificate programs in hospitality management.

"Hospitality is a growing industry in our region," said Jeff Hayden, HCC vice president of business and community services. "The hotel lab will give students the ability to learn in a model hotel room and reception lobby, gain knowledge about key card access systems, and understand point-of-sale technology. This is the kind of experiential training employers have been asking for."

The competitive Skills Capital Grants require institutions to partner with local businesses and align the curriculum to meet industry requirements. HCC's partners



*SUBMITTED PHOTO*

**A hotel training lab is coming to the second floor of the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, thanks to a recent \$35,000 state grant award.**

include the Log Cabin Delaney House, the Tower Square Hotel Springfield and MassHire career centers in Holyoke and Springfield.

"The enhanced training will allow students to gain necessary hands-on skills for employment, transfer to

a bachelor's degree program, or advance their careers," Log Cabin Delaney House president Peter Rosskothan wrote in a letter supporting the grant. "We look forward to working with HCC to increase our regional capacity to train students for the growing hospitality industry. The growth of a strong and qualified workforce will impact every hotel property in the valley."

Over the past three years, HCC has been awarded nearly \$400,000 through the Skills Capital Grant Program, including \$127,741 in 2016 to expand and enhance its EMT Training Program and \$229,500 in 2017 for kitchen equipment at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, which opened in January 2018 on Race Street in the Holyoke Innovation District.

This new round of Skills Capital Grants mainly targets educational programs for people who may need help overcoming barriers to employment - those who may be unemployed or underemployed, lack English proficiency, or do not yet hold college credentials and want to develop new skills.

"These grants create important career pathways for both students and adult learners across the Commonwealth to support key industries," said Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito.

The hotel lab should be up and running in February, Hayden said.