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Resource hub to get Ford help

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The Desert Sun*

RANCHO MIRAGE - Ford Motor Co. today will announce a \$50,000 planning grant to the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership to help develop a resource hub in the valley.

Its purpose:

Provide professional development to area educators.

Create networking opportunities between the education and business community for the Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies, known as Ford PAS.

Ford PAS is a program that engages high school students in business, global economics, engineering, alternative energy and math studies while honing job skills for today's workforce.

The Ford Motor Co. Fund introduced Ford PAS to the valley in 2007.

Eighty teachers from Coachella Valley have been trained in Ford PAS to launch the Ford PAS Resource Hub.

Veronica Nicholas, an architecture and engineering teacher at Cathedral City High School, said Ford PAS has brought 21st Century hands-on learning to the classroom.

With the resource hub, Nicolas said, "I can keep up with the latest trends and have access to continuous training that allow the classroom to continue flourishing."

The grant will be announced at the sixth annual Ford PAS National Networking Conference in Rancho Las Palmas Resort and Spa. At the event, Assemblyman John Benoit, R-Palm Desert, and the mayors of nine cities will present resolutions commending Ford for its investment in the Coachella Valley.

Kim McNulty, of CVEP, said the demand for professional development has risen since Ford PAS was introduced.

CVEP came together as a region to put a plan into action to address the high school dropout rate, workforce needs and economic development - relying on education as the cornerstone of that work.

"This grant will help us develop a regional training resource to strengthen and expand the work we do with our business, education and program partners as we help students master the skills they need to succeed through high school, college and (their) career," McNulty said.

Cheryl Carrier, a program director for Ford Motor Co. Fund, said CVEP is playing a critical role in forging links between educators and employers to ensure the next generation has workforce skills to succeed in a global economy.