



Center key to state's cyber-security

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OKLAHOMA CITY (JR) - The Oklahoma Center for Information Assurance and Forensics Education Consortium has been designated as Oklahoma's first advanced technology education center.

The center will be key to cyber-security across the state - especially in rural communities, Gov. Brad Henry said.

The consortium includes Central Technology Center-Drumright; Moore Norman Technology Center; Francis Tuttle Technology Center, Oklahoma City; Oklahoma City Community College; OSU-Okmulgee; Rose State College, Tulsa Community College and the University of Tulsa. The University of Tulsa serves as the principal training entity and a mentor to the two-year institutions. The Oklahoma Center for Information Assurance and Forensics Education was awarded a \$3 million grant from the National Science Foundation. During the next four years, the grant money will help establish cyber-security education and work force development programs at two-year institutions in Oklahoma and neighboring states.

As an advance technology center, the Oklahoma Center for Information Assurance and Forensics Education will establish similar programs at six additional technology centers and 14 additional community colleges during the next four years.

"We worked to ensure that all Oklahomans would have the opportunity to participate in this high-tech growth area," Henry said.

This is the second center for cyber-security in the country and the nation's first in the area of digital forensics. The consortium's schools currently serve nearly 60 percent of Oklahoma's population and more than 70 percent of the states' information technology work force.

"Since 90 percent of the individuals trained are expected to come from the work force or enter the work force upon completion of their studies, the advanced technology education center will significantly impact work force development and training in Oklahoma and

neighboring states," said Sheryl Hale, state coordinator of adult and career development for the CareerTech system.

Francis Tuttle, Oklahoma City, and Central Tech, Drumright, are entering the second year as cyber-security education institutions. The primary focus at those tech centers has been on training high school and adult students for occupations to fill positions in the cyber-security field.

Last year, Francis Tuttle launched its Enterprise Communications program where instructor Joe Elkins taught adult students the basics about digital forensics and cyber-security issues.

"Students check computer server 'firewalls' and learn about the use of hardware such as a biometric mouse that reads fingerprints and software specializing in iris identification," Elkins said.