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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Northeast Colorado BOCES Launches CDL Training Program to Address Area Semi Driver Shortage

In the rural and agricultural landscape of Northeast Colorado, a pressing question loomed over the region's economic future: how would the area keep moving? Recent data revealed that many semi-truck drivers in the region were nearing retirement, creating an urgent need for skilled workers to step into these critical roles.

To address this shortage, the Northeast Colorado Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), in collaboration with key partners, launched a new Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training program. This initiative is part of a larger effort to create career pathways that align with the specific needs of local employers, ensuring they have access to a skilled workforce in high-demand industries.

"Northeast Colorado is largely rural and agriculturally focused," said Tamara Durbin, Northeast Colorado BOCES Executive Director. "Transportation is vital to the area, especially in the agricultural industry." The CDL training program aims to meet this growing demand, ensuring the region has enough qualified drivers to keep the transportation industry thriving.

The CDL training program is the result of a collaborative effort among several key partners. Northeast Colorado BOCES, along with its 12-member school districts, provides funding and support for students participating in the program. Northeastern Junior College (NJC) supplies the instructor and curriculum, with in-person classes held at Holyoke High School in Holyoke, CO, and Akron High School in Akron, CO. Additionally, the Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) and Colorado Succeeds (CS), two Colorado-based consulting agencies, have been instrumental in developing this and other career pathways, ensuring the program effectively meets the region's workforce needs.

"The program is open to any eligible student in our 12-district region," Durbin explained. "Students need to be 18 years old or turn 18 by the time they complete the training."

The first CDL training classes began in January 2024, with 16 students graduating in the spring. The fall session kicked off in August 2024, with 18-20 students expected to attend.

"It's truly a great program," Durbin added. "It addresses a real need and provides students with a valuable opportunity, ensuring greater safety on the job and a sustainable, higher wage for young people."

The program is funded through the 2025-2026 school year, with grant support aiding its expansion and impact across the region.

Northeast BOCES is a regional educational service agency dedicated to providing high-quality programs and services to students and communities in Northeast Colorado. All BOCES programs are initiated and governed by member districts.

For more information, visit <https://www.nebores.org/>.