

training participant Donald Partee, who worked on the Chemetco Superfund Site in nearby Chouteau Township, Illinois. “It makes you more employable.”

Partee, an ex-offender, says he had never had steady employment. But, after graduating from St. Louis Community College’s environmental job training program, he says, “I found my career in this field.”

The Chemetco site, a former secondary copper smelting facility that produced cathodes and anodes for electrical and electronic manufacturing, was closed in 2001, leaving behind contamination, including cadmium, copper, lead, and zinc. After graduating, Partee took a job with Environmental Resources, Inc., supervising a 10-person crew cleaning out an old storage facility at the Chemetco site.

Since then, Partee has earned an Associate Degree in environmental science and a Bachelor’s Degree in public health. Today, he’s established a successful career as a Project Manager with Spray Services, Inc. Plus, he’s hired six other program graduates to work on his team.



The Carter Carburetor Superfund site, shown here, is one of thousands of contaminated properties in and around St. Louis. Photo: Gene Watson, HRP.

of asbestos-containing materials, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and trichloroethylene.

Greg Lomax, a 46-year-old graduate of St. Louis Community College’s environmental job training program, is one of the crew members working at the Carter Carburetor site. Before taking the training, he was working two jobs—as a prep cook and setting up for banquets. When a friend told him about the college’s job training program, his ears perked up. “Going green was all over the news,” he says. “I wanted to get the training and see what the environmental field had to offer—and what I have to offer the environmental field.”

“We focus our recruitment where we know people are living in areas with Superfund sites and other contaminated properties, where the buildings are crumbling. The intent is to train people, not only to get a job, but also to enable them to better themselves and their own community.”

— Rene Dulle
Project Manager
St. Louis Community College’s
Workforce Solutions Group



Greg Lomax, a graduate of St. Louis Community College’s environmental remediation program, is a Senior Site Technician at the Carter Carburetor site.

Finding Success in Superfund Cleanup

St. Louis is home to the Carter Carburetor Superfund site. From the 1920s to the 1980s, the plant manufactured carburetors for gasoline- and diesel-powered engines. The 480,000-square-foot facility, spanning a six-block radius, consists of several multi-story buildings used for manufacturing, testing, warehousing and offices. When the plant closed in 1984, the owner dismantled much of the equipment, but the buildings remained idle, with fencing and signs warning of contamination. In 2014, efforts got underway to clean up the site, including removal

Married with two children, Lomax knew he needed a more stable job to support his family. “It wasn’t about me anymore,” Lomax says. “I wanted to build a foundation for my kids, so they could witness through my actions the benefits of working hard to succeed in life.”

Shortly after completing the training, Lomax found himself with two job opportunities the same week. His first job was with a St. Louis-based environmental

contractor specializing in asbestos, lead and mold abatement, where he made \$13.50 an hour. Later, he helped monitor air quality for crews cleaning out boilers. Eventually, he landed a salaried position with HRP Associates, where he now serves as a Senior Site Technician at the Carter Carburetor site. He supervises workers removing lead-based paint and asbestos-containing materials. His responsibilities include routine site inspections for environmental, health and safety compliance. He also performs environmental oversight, contractor management, environmental multimedia sampling, and coordination with EPA.



Lomax ensures that workers like these who are removing asbestos-containing materials from the Carter Carburetor site do so safely. Photo: Gene Watson, HRP.

“Once you get a foot in the door, prove that you can be depended upon and show that you are receptive to learning, you can be as successful as you want to be,” Lomax says.

Eugene Watson, Regional Office Manager at HRP Associates, Inc., applauds the work Lomax is doing and the efforts of the training team at St. Louis Community College. “Mr. Lomax is one of the best employees I have had the opportunity to work with in my 29 years,” Watson says. “Not only have I experienced the quality of training and preparedness of the graduates as provided by the team at St. Louis

“Just because you are raised in a particular environment, doesn’t mean you have to remain a product of that environment. You can succeed in life if you apply yourself.”

— Greg Lomax
Program Graduate

Community College, but I also have witnessed the difference that the team can make in individuals’ lives.”

Increasing Impact Through Partnerships

To maximize opportunities for mutual benefits, the college’s training program collaborates with other service providers in the community, such as Fathers’ Support Center, which works to address the problem of absentee and non-involved fathers. Marcel Scaife, Transitional Case Manager at Fathers’ Support Center, says the college “has helped many of our men obtain and retain employment. Just recently, four of our clients went through the program, and three of them received employment within the first month. This program is essential, because it allows individuals to acquire the skills necessary to gain employment.”

Another training program graduate, who was a referral from Fathers’ Support Center, is Carl Baldes. He came to St. Louis Community College at a difficult point in his life. Having been formerly incarcerated, he had struggled to find steady work. “His morale was low when I met him,” Dulle says, “but after he completed the training, he found work in lead abatement.” With some experience under his belt, he landed a job with Miller Construction, doing asbestos abatement in an old school in Jefferson City, Missouri. Later, he took a job with Clean Harbors, a large environmental services company, traveling across the country to clean up asbestos and other hazardous materials at manufacturing plants and in rail cars.

“The college’s environmental job training program helped me get back on my feet and gave me the confidence to go out and apply for these jobs. It opened so many doors for me.”

— Carl Baldes
Program Graduate

Diverse Careers and Second Chances

Many hiring managers now call Dulle directly when they have a need for asbestos, lead or mold abatement and confined space management. “For example, we have a good relationship with Spray Services, Inc.,” Dulle says. “Over the years, the company has hired several graduates of our program, primarily for asbestos and lead abatement.”

Examples of other employers hiring graduates include Cardinal Environmental, Cenpro Services, Inc., Code

Red Safety, Making America Better, and Midwest Service Group. Environmental Resources, Inc., offered all 10 graduates who completed the training in May 2015 jobs responding to the avian flu outbreak in Iowa. Six accepted those jobs, while three others are doing asbestos abatement in St. Louis with All in 1 Environmental Services, a woman-owned business established by Nina Algee, a 2010 program graduate.

Algee, President and Chief Executive Officer of All in 1 Environmental Services, is eager to hire graduates from St. Louis Community College's environmental job training program. As a graduate herself, she understands the challenges many participants face when trying to enter the job market, especially those who've been previously incarcerated. "I've got seven graduates working for me, and six of them had spent time in jail," Algee says. But, you know what? Not one of them has missed a day on the job. They are fantastic employees."

"This program gives people a second chance, especially those who've been previously incarcerated."

— Nina Algee
President and Chief Executive Officer
All in 1 Environmental Services

Evolving With the Times

Since 2000, St. Louis Community College has received four rounds of funding from EPA to support the college's environmental job training program and was selected to receive a fifth award in September 2015. Over those years, the college placed more than 75 percent of its graduates in the local job market in specialized, in-demand positions. "Our graduates are well suited for multiple roles," Dulle says. "We see our graduates finding themselves headed into supervisory roles pretty quickly, and the comprehensiveness of the training is a big reason for that."

Over time, Dulle and her team have adapted the college's job training program to meet the evolving demands of employers and local needs. For example, the St. Louis Development Corporation is leading an initiative to clean up abandoned gas stations at the neighborhood level. In response, Dulle says, "We've added underground storage tank training to our program, based on this initiative and the possibility for future job opportunities for graduates."

But finding a job isn't the only end benefit. Graduates walk away with greater confidence and self-esteem.

"It's been a great ride," Lomax says. "I'm living the highest of the highs, but I've visited the lowest of the low. I'm thankful and appreciative that I can contribute to a team. It feels good knowing that you are appreciated and can be relied upon to complete whatever the task is."

His next task? Giving a commencement speech at graduation for the next class of job training participants.

Cypress Mandela Trains Oakland's Unemployed to Clean Up Superfund Sites

Oakland, California, is a city of approximately 400,000, with one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the country. Fifty-eight percent of residents are African American, and 40 percent are Hispanic. The neighborhood of West Oakland, in the northwest corner of the city and across the bay from San Francisco, has one of the highest crime rates in the state.

Several former military bases in Oakland and the Port of Oakland have hazardous materials and waste sites on them. The area is also home to several high-profile Superfund sites.

"Contamination seems to thrive in areas with minorities and people with low incomes and low education," says Art Shanks, Executive Director of Cypress Mandela Training Center, a community-based organization working with unemployed and underemployed Bay area men and women. "The basic challenge in this community is that it's been devastated by unemployment, with a jobless rate near 29 percent. Rampant drug use and substandard education are problems as well."

But Shanks' organization has come up with a proven formula for preparing its training participants to succeed in life and in environmental careers.

A Recipe for Success

Cypress Mandela was one of the first organizations in the country to receive funding from EPA for its job training pilot program in 1998. Since then, the nonprofit has been a repeat grant recipient for its job training program, which targets economically disadvantaged residents of Oakland and surrounding East Bay communities. The focus is on minorities, veterans, formerly incarcerated individuals and at-risk youth.

Cypress's boot camp-style approach involves physical training, drug testing and a variety of life skills, including