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Louisiana Program Wins National First Place Honors

The National Association of Industry Specific Training Directors' (NAISTD) recently awarded First Place Honors to a Louisiana health care training program funded with over \$2 million of state dollars (four percent of Louisiana's annual funding). According to NAISTD President, Dave Lieving, the board of directors viewed this program as "an excellent example of how to do it right."

At the 2003 NAISTD conference, three factors were cited as exceptional in Louisiana's award winning program: effective use of multiple partnerships uniting industry, state government units and universities, availability of significant job promotion opportunities and the use of technologically advanced distance learning.

The award was granted to a partnership formed between Acadian Ambulance Service and the Louisiana Departments of Labor (LDOL), and Economic Development (LED). It was estimated that 500 new paramedics were needed each year with existing training programs providing only about one-third that amount. This multi-partner program allowed the state of Louisiana to provide training to an additional 280 healthcare personnel to solve the paramedic shortage. It was noted that as existing workers completed their training they would receive promotions with an average combined wage increase of 45%. As a result of these advances, approximately 160 new jobs would become available.

The program utilizes compressed video technology to broadcast the training from the host site to five other sites. Students at all locations are able to interact with each other and with the host site lead instructor. Teaching combines lecture, video, exercises, patient simulations, and hands-on skills training to reinforce learning objectives and prepare the student for the actual work environment.

The National Association of Industry Specific Training Directors' (NAISTD) is an organization established in 1983 to advance the professionalism and effectiveness of statewide industry-specific training programs. Full membership is limited to those in state government responsible for that state's industry-specific program in support of the states economic development efforts.

Note: Louisiana has recently implemented cluster based economic development focusing on nine industries: Advanced Materials, Durable Goods/Manufacturing, Energy/Oil and Gas, Agriculture, Forest and Food Technology, Entertainment, Information Technology, Life Sciences, Biotechnology and Biomedical, Logistics and Transportation and Petrochemical and Environmental Technology.