

\$2.8 million industrial safety training center opens



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GONZALES – Contract workers employed in the construction, power and petrochemical industries will be able to get federally mandated training at a new \$2.8 million center opening Monday in Gonzales.

The Alliance Safety Council is opening its newest training facility, an 11,000-square-foot center, in Gonzales' new Edenborne Development, which replaces the safety council's original 2,600-square-foot training facility on Ruby Street.

“With all the work that has been charted for Louisiana for the next five to six years, with new projects because of the low price of natural gas, the need for training is going to

increase,” said Kathy [Trahan](#), president and CEO of the Alliance Safety Council.

And because all contract workers must, at the very least, take a basic safety course before they can set foot on a petrochemical site, the training centers are essential, she said.

“It’s the last stop before going to work,” Trahan said.

Alliance, a nonprofit based in Baton Rouge, provides the entry-level safety class and other types of safety training required by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration for more than 150,000 workers in a variety of industries in this area, including construction, power and petrochemical.

The nonprofit has more than 1,000 company members that pay a yearly membership fee that entitles them to have their contract workers receive training at discounted prices.

Alliance began to move training closer to its members in the Baton Rouge area over the past decade, opening satellite training centers in Gonzales and Addis.

At its headquarters in Baton Rouge, Alliance also moved two years ago to a new, larger training facility on North Reiger Road.

“Along the way, we discovered a huge need in Ascension to serve the 30-plus (industrial) facilities” in the area, Trahan said.

Alliance knew it would need a larger training center in Gonzales one day.

Another development two years ago spurred the Alliance Safety Council’s decision to buy 2.5 acres in the Edenborne Development for its new training center.

That's when the Alliance Safety Council, in partnership with the LSU School of Engineering, was selected as a new OSHA Outreach Training Institute Education Center.

It means, Trahan said, "We train the trainers" of OSHA courses. Alliance was one of only four new centers selected in 2012 by OSHA to train its course instructors and the first one chosen to do that training in Louisiana. It serves OSHA's Region VI, which includes Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

"They only open up applications once every five years," Trahan said of OSHA and its Outreach Training Institute Education Centers.

The Alliance Safety Council has offered some OSHA courses for trainers in the past, but with the new facility in Gonzales, its classroom and computer lab sizes have doubled and it soon will be offering the entire slate of those courses, Trahan said.

The Alliance has had a long collaboration with the LSU School of Engineering.

"They need to make sure they're filling the needs for employers, and we're a conduit" for that information, Trahan said.

"What we do here is directly tied to industry," said Chuck Berryman, chairman of the Bert S. Turner Department of Construction Management at LSU.

"There's a need to do both the academics and the training, so there's a natural fit between LSU and Alliance," he said.

The Alliance Safety Council provides training courses at its three facilities as well as on location at plant sites, online and through authorized training providers elsewhere in the

country.

The workers getting the training, which their employers pay for, may be Louisiana contractors or they may be from out of state, Trahan said.

“Sometimes we’re the first impression a contractor will get of our industries,” she said.

BY ELLYN COUVILLION

ecouvillion@theadvocate.com

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