



# DegreeDays

News from the Virginia Propane Gas Association

## Reunited and It Feels So Good: VAPGA Spring Meeting a Success!

After months of uncertainty regarding the status of in-person meetings, VAPGA members and guests came together April 25-27 at Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg, VA for the 2021 Spring Meeting. It was the first official VAPGA gathering in almost 18 months! This year's meeting attracted over 60 Marketer and Supplier attendees from 42 different organizations.

The event kicked off Sunday morning with a Captain's Choice golf tournament at Kingsmill's River Course—designed by the legendary Pete Dye. While the day started off a little cloudy, the sun eventually broke through and it ended up being a beautiful day to be on the course. Congratulations to the team of **Steve Barton, Taft Yeatts, Jesse Lord, and Jamison Walker** who won the tournament by one stroke, carding an 8-under 63! Special thanks to the Supplier Committee who sponsored the beverage cart and to **Rita Pecilunas**, Membership Committee Chair, who was the official photographer and raffle ticket sales extraordinaire!

On Monday morning, VAPGA President **Nicole Sullivan** welcomed attendees and gave an overview of the day's slate. One of the featured speakers of the morning was NPGA President & CEO, Steve Kaminski. Steve gave an update on current NPGA initiatives and highlighted some of their current challenges in the legislative arena. While some of the information regarding aggressive electrification and state gas bans was sobering, Steve emphasized some critical ways in which VAPGA members could (and must) engage local legislators to support the industry. Speaking of legislators, Virginia State Senator Monty Mason also gave some remarks to attendees. Monty Mason represents the 1st District, which includes Williamsburg, and has been a strong advocate and friend of the propane industry. Many thanks to Monty for his time and willingness to speak at the meeting.

The rest of the day consisted of committee meetings, an update from PERC President & CEO Tucker Perkins, a presentation on safety and training from **Dennis Cruise**, a report on the Vets2Techs program by V.E.T.S. Co-Founder Jesse Lord, and a 2021 General Assembly recap from VAPGA lobbyist **Mike O'Connor**. All in all, it was a productive and informative meeting, and a welcome return to discussing the business of the association in-person, rather than over Zoom.

continued on page 5>

## Upcoming Events



### SUMMER MEETING

July 11-14, 2021

Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront,  
Virginia Beach, VA

Registration opens in June.

See page 4 about booking  
your hotel room!



### FALL MEETING

October 10-12, 2021

The Virginian Hotel  
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# President's Message



Greetings, Members!

It was so wonderful to see many of you last month at the Kingsmill Resort for our Spring Meeting. I left the meeting feeling very encouraged for several reasons. Zach Eisenman and his team did a wonderful job organizing all of the events and the survey results suggested this observation was shared by attending members. I felt encouraged by the engagement in discussions especially on development of our legislative strategy and by how many of you volunteered to be a part of these efforts. But most of all, I felt encouraged by the strength of our fellowship. The friendships and camaraderie in our group has always felt special to me and it was really great to be together again.

We were honored to have Steve Kaminski, President and CEO of NPGA, join us and give an update on NPGA's legislative efforts and I was struck by one of his comments. "Our (propane industry) strength is people." This sets us apart from many, if not all, of competing energies and something we need to continue to highlight as we cement propane as a fuel of the future. Yes, we have a great story. We have a clean fuel that by all accounts should be included in our country's decarbonization efforts. We have a great product with so many diverse applications that is there to serve in times of crisis. We have the right management to support us. And best of all, we have people. But this story won't tell itself. We need you, our greatest asset, to be storytellers. I felt encouraged by the feedback after the Spring Meeting and ask that if you aren't already, you get involved in this effort.

I am also excited to invite you once again to join us July 11-14 in Virginia Beach for our 2021 Summer Meeting. Come and enjoy the sun, sand, and socializing with your industry colleagues, old and new. We will be celebrating the association's 75th anniversary with a special banquet event on Tuesday night, so make sure to register and book your room for the event!

*Nicole Sullivan*  
President

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Steve Barton



# REGISTRATION OPENS FIRST WEEK OF JUNE!

## SUMMER MEETING

### July 11–14, 2021

Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront, Virginia Beach, VA

#### Back at the Beach!

Join us Sunday, July 11 – Wednesday, July 14 for the Summer Meeting at the Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront in sunny Virginia Beach! Registration information and a detailed agenda will be sent out in early June, but make sure to reserve your hotel room today!

- Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront Discounted Group Rate – **\$289 + tax per night.**
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- [Make a reservation online](#) or call 1-888-236-2427. If you call, be sure to state that you are with the “Virginia Propane Gas Association” or “VAPGA” room block to qualify for the group rate. Rate cannot be changed later if you fail to do so.



## WHAT ARE YOUR VAPGA MEMORIES?

As we continue to prepare for our 75th Anniversary Celebration at the Summer Meeting in Virginia Beach, we are asking all members to submit any pictures, stories, or VAPGA memories they have to the Chair of the 75th Anniversary Committee, [Meghan Kulinski](#). We look forward to celebrating the past, present, and future in sunny Virginia Beach!





> **Spring Meeting**, continued from page 1

Monday evening, attendees gathered on the terrace overlooking the James River for an outdoor reception, before sitting down for the banquet and awards presentation. VAPGA President **Nicole Sullivan** announced the prize winners from the golf tournament and presented Past President **Taft Yeatts** with the customary wooden bobtail after thanking him for his service to the organization. **Elizabeth Phillips** was awarded the 2020 President's Award, given by Taft, for her commitment, hard work, and service to the association. Taft also presented former board member Dennis

Hochkammer with a plaque recognizing his service from 2014-2020.

The VAPGA and VPREF Board of Directors met on Tuesday morning, capping off a productive few days in Williamsburg. Many thanks to all attendees, volunteers, and hotel staff who made the event a success. We hope you'll join us for our next meeting, July 11-14, 2021 in Virginia Beach to celebrate our association's 75th anniversary!

*Zach Eisenman*  
Executive Director









# | YoungGassers



Thank you all for your support and guidance as I've become the new Young Gassers Committee Chair. As a Young Gasser myself, I've had the opportunity to realize how career-oriented and rewarding this industry can be and I look forward to working with you all in spreading the word. We all face the same challenges in hiring and training the next generation of our workforce, and this committee's efforts are just one way to increase our industry's visibility and attractiveness—while rewarding those who want to further invest in themselves. What better way to do so than the Young Gasser Scholarship!

As a reminder, **this year's scholarship application deadline is May 31**, so please share with your colleagues and get the word out! Any member or member dependent who will be attending an accredited 2- or 4-year higher education or trade school (full-time as of Fall 2021) is eligible to apply. **The rules and guidelines for the scholarship can be found [here](#) and the application can be found [here](#).** The committee will review applications and select the winners in June. Winners will be announced in the July newsletter and at our Summer Meeting in Virginia Beach.

A special thank you to all of those who donated and played in the Spring Golf Tournament at Kingsmill. We had a successful round of fundraising as all attendees were generous in having a shot at taking home the raffled Bayou Classic cooler and fish fryer. Congratulations to **Harry Tarsi** and **Darrell St. John** for winning the raffles. 694 raffle tickets were sold, which raised \$894 and an additional \$390 was contributed via mulligans for a weekend total of \$1,266 added to the Young Gassers Fund. Nice job!

Looking forward to this summer's golf event, we hope to out-do ourselves and raise even more money. The golf tournament will be held at [Heron Ridge Golf Course](#) on Sunday, July 11th, where we'll have hole sponsorships and more. Please reach out to [Zach Eisenman](#) if you'd like to be a hole sponsor for \$125. Be on the lookout for an email on hole sponsorships from Zach and be sure to confirm your sponsorships early!

Lastly, please reach out for any questions related to the Young Gassers Committee, Summer golf tournament, ideas for fundraising, or simply if you want to get involved. Again, thank you to all for your ongoing support and enthusiasm of the Young Gassers. Spread the word!

*Jamison Walker*

Young Gasser Committee Chair  
[JRWalker@BlossmanGas.com](mailto:JRWalker@BlossmanGas.com)

## 2021 Rebates



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Please contact **Tami Guthrie** at [tami@eameetings.com](mailto:tami@eameetings.com) or **804.241.2232** for additional information or to request an application and pre-approval numbers.

## Tell Us Your Story!

Do you have any company news to share? Big anniversaries? Success stories? Philanthropic events? We'd like to know! Please send your news to Zach Eisenman, Executive Director, at [zach@eameetings.com](mailto:zach@eameetings.com). Your news may be published in future newsletters.



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### Is This the Year Republicans End a Decade Long Drought on Holding Statewide Office?

New Jersey and Virginia are the only two states to elect a Governor a year after each Presidential election. This year they are considered bellwether events for 2022's midterm elections and a referendum on President Biden's first year in office. Republicans recently nominated arguably the most electable candidate: Glen Younkin of Great Falls, the former CEO of Carlyle Corporation. It is reported that Mr. Younkin can self-fund the reported \$30-40 million it will take to run an effective statewide campaign.

On the Democratic side, Governor Terry McAuliffe is making an attempt to become only the second person to serve non-consecutive terms in the Governor's office. While reportedly substantially ahead in the polls, he faces six challengers, and it is possible Jennifer Carroll Foy who is funded almost exclusively by Environmental and Labor activists could pull off an upset. While her credentials are underwhelming (she served one term plus one year as a Delegate and then quit to run for Governor), Virginia Democratic politics have shifted sharply to the left, and Ms. Carroll Foy's position on the issues should play well with that base of the electorate. My guess, three weeks away from the June 8th Primary, is that Terry McAuliffe wins but by a closer than expected margin.

If it were to come to a race between Younkin and McAuliffe it would be the focus of the nation, pitting a traditional



business-oriented Republican without a public record, against someone with a four-year track record in the Governors' office and decades in Democratic politics. Whatever the result, it will likely present opportunities for members to urge that the "electrify everything" train be pulled into the station and help assure that Virginia does not join the Transportation Climate Initiative which will ban use of all fossil fuels in the Commonwealth by 2030.

Over the coming months we will be updating you on the Governor's race and also the status of the House of Delegates where Democrats currently hold a six seat majority. Decisions made at the polls in November will be important in determining the future success of propane marketing companies across Virginia.

*Mike O'Connor*  
VAPGA Lobbyist



## Make a PAC Donation Today!

The mission of VAPGA's PAC is to distribute contributions to candidates for the state legislature who, by their acts, demonstrate support of the propane industry and the private enterprise system. Your donations help VAPGA gain visibility and leverage access to promote our industry. Now more than ever, we need your support to combat the electrification and fuel ban efforts which threaten our industry. Please consider making a donation to the PAC today.

If you'd like to make an investment in the future of Virginia's propane industry, contact **Zach Eisenman**, Executive Director, at [zach@eameetings.com](mailto:zach@eameetings.com), or **John Phillips**, VPAC Committee Chair, at [jphillips@peifuels.com](mailto:jphillips@peifuels.com).

# Is Electricity Really a “Clean” Energy?

## 2019 Virginia Electric Power Generation Mix

- Nuclear – 31.3%
- Natural Gas – 60.8%
- Coal – 3.4%
- Petroleum – 0.2%
- Hydro – 1.6%
- Non-hydro Renewables (e.g., biomass, wind, utility-scale solar) – 3.2%

## Environmental Impacts of Traditional Generation Sources

- Bituminous coal produces 205 pounds (lbs.) of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) per million British thermal units (Btu) of energy.<sup>1</sup> Coal combustion produces high levels of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, mercury, and residuals including ash.<sup>2</sup>
- Residual fuel oil produces 174 lbs. of CO<sub>2</sub> per million Btu of energy.<sup>3</sup> Oil-fired generation, especially with heavier grades, results in excessive levels of nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter (power plants burning distillate fuels will emit less CO<sub>2</sub> and criteria pollutants).<sup>45</sup>
- Natural gas produces 117 lbs. of CO<sub>2</sub> per million Btu of energy.<sup>6</sup> However, when fugitive natural gas (which is primarily methane) is released into the atmosphere due to leaks in faulty or aging infrastructure, it has a global warming potential (GWP) far greater than CO<sub>2</sub>.
- Methane’s 20-year GWP is 84 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.<sup>7</sup>
- Methane’s 100-year GWP is 28 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.<sup>8</sup>
- While hydroelectric and nuclear power are carbon friendly, both carry baggage. The former can adversely impact flora and fauna, and alter the water’s natural temperature and flow characteristics;<sup>9</sup> the latter produces spent fuel containing harmful levels of radiation that requires safe, secure storage.<sup>10</sup>
- Pumped-storage hydropower plants possess the same negative environmental features (e.g., ecological damage) associated with traditional dams and are net energy consumers (i.e., they consume more energy than they actually produce).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.php?id=73&t=11>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/?page=coal\\_environment](https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/?page=coal_environment)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.eia.gov/electricity/annual/html/epa\\_a\\_03.html](https://www.eia.gov/electricity/annual/html/epa_a_03.html)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.iso-ne.com/static-assets/documents/2018/01/envtlupdate\\_20180130.pdf](https://www.iso-ne.com/static-assets/documents/2018/01/envtlupdate_20180130.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www3.epa.gov/ttnchie1/ap42/ch01/final/c01s03.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.php?id=73&t=11>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/understanding-global-warming-potentials#Learn%20why>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/understanding-global-warming-potentials>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/index.php?page=hydropower\\_environment](https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/index.php?page=hydropower_environment)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/fact-sheets/radwaste.html#stor>

<sup>11</sup> [https://energyeducation.ca/encyclopedia/Pumped\\_storage](https://energyeducation.ca/encyclopedia/Pumped_storage)

## 2020–2021 VAPGA Leadership

### OFFICERS

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Nicole Sullivan, *Anderson Propane*

#### PRESIDENT-ELECT

Colin Wood-Bradley, *Tarantin Industries*

#### TREASURER

Meghan Kulinski, *Valley Energy*

#### SECRETARY

Tony Hogue, *Anderson Propane*

#### DIRECTOR TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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#### NAPGA STATE DIRECTOR

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Taylor Sutton, *Tiger Fuel*

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## Complete the Annual Retail Propane Sales Report by May 31

PERC is partnering with Frost & Sullivan to conduct its annual retail propane sales report. All propane retailers were sent an email invitation from 2020salesreport@frost.com and/or salesreport@propane.com with a unique link to complete their company's report. If you are unsure who at your company received this invitation or if you did not receive it, please contact Rachel Greenberg, PERC's Senior Market Research Analyst, at rachel.greenberg@propane.com or 202-452-8975. Why is this important? It ensures Virginia receives an accurate amount of state rebate funding from PERC. These funds support great projects in our state that directly benefit your business operations and growth. This is the only report that studies market trends in our state and region and can be used to help your business explore new opportunities. Please submit your report today!

## Welcome New Members!

**Alliance Energy Services** (Supplier)  
Kansas City, MO  
Sarah Sager

**American Copper & Brass, LLC** (Supplier)  
Coldwater, MI  
Lovellette Johnson

**Blue Peak Resources** (Supplier)  
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John Armentano

**Purple Frog Graphics** (Supplier)  
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# | Safety/RegulationsUpdate

## Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) Becomes Effective February 7, 2022

FMCSA's Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) regulations take effect February 7, 2022, establishing minimum training requirements for entry-level drivers. This includes those applying to:

- Obtain a Class A or Class B CDL for the first time;
- Upgrade an existing Class B CDL to a Class A CDL; or
- Obtain a school bus (S), passenger (P), or hazardous materials (H) endorsement for the first time.

The ELDT regulations are not retroactive; the entry-level driver training requirements do not apply to individuals holding a valid CDL or an S, P, or H endorsement issued prior to February 7, 2022.

Applicants who obtain a Commercial Learners Permit (CLP) prior to February 7, 2022 and obtain a CDL before the CLP or renewed CLP expires are not subject to the ELDT requirements.

Persons who meet one of the exceptions for taking a skills test in 49 CFR Part 383 are also exempt from the ELDT requirements. This exception is directed toward current and former military personnel. Additionally, current military personnel may apply for a CLP or a CDL in the state where they are stationed but not domiciled.

NPGA is currently developing an administrative service for the Entry Level Driver Training requirements for companies that wish to provide the required training for new drivers. FMCSA will also publish an online registry of training providers to help CDL applicants locate certified training providers.

Additional information regarding the ELDT program is available from FMCSA [here](#).

## Clean School Bus Program Applications Now Available



The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is now accepting applications for battery electric and propane school buses through the Clean School Bus Program.

DEQ will award \$20 million to Virginia public schools from the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust through two rounds of competitive application processes. The grants will fund the price difference between a battery electric bus or a propane bus and equivalent diesel bus, up to \$265,000 per electric bus and associated charger and customer-side installation or up to \$20,000 per propane bus.

The Request for Applications provides an overview of the application timeline and process, information on applicant and project eligibility, available funding, reimbursement requirements, scoring and selection criteria, and award process. The applications and required attachments are available on DEQ's [Volkswagen webpage](#).

Important dates :

- June 25, 2021 – Applications due by 5 p.m.
- July 2021 – Awards announced
- To Be Determined – Second round of applications

## VAPGA CETP Training—We Want To Hear From You!

For the foreseeable future, in-person training programs will continue to be on an individual company basis. While we work toward resuming a more "normal" CETP training schedule, we encourage members to reach out to Trent Johnson, Chair of the Education & Safety Committee and Dennis Cruise to make them aware of your needs. Please take a moment to advise the committee of all specific training or safety programs that will deliver the most value to you this year. If you would be willing to host VAPGA training at your company, please let us know that as well.

Trent Johnson can be reached at [trent.johnson@bergquistinc.com](mailto:trent.johnson@bergquistinc.com).

Dennis Cruise can be reached at (434) 841-1636 or [propanetrainingservices@gmail.com](mailto:propanetrainingservices@gmail.com)

# Industry Embracing PERC Learning Center for Optimum Workforce Education Experience

A fundamental shift in the design of propane workforce training is drawing record engagement and rave reviews just over a year into its launch.

The fully integrated Learning Center at [propane.com/training](https://propane.com/training) launched in January 2020 with the goal to make workforce training and certification better, faster, and more economical. The platform provides users convenient access to all materials from their desktop computer, laptop, cellphone, or tablet for either individual training or to enhance traditional classroom learning.

"Today's workforce learns differently than previous generations, and learners are looking for a personalized, relevant learning experience," says Elena Scott, PERC's manager of industry training programs. "Working with marketers, we can create training that gets the learner on the job faster and focuses training on content directly relevant to their work."

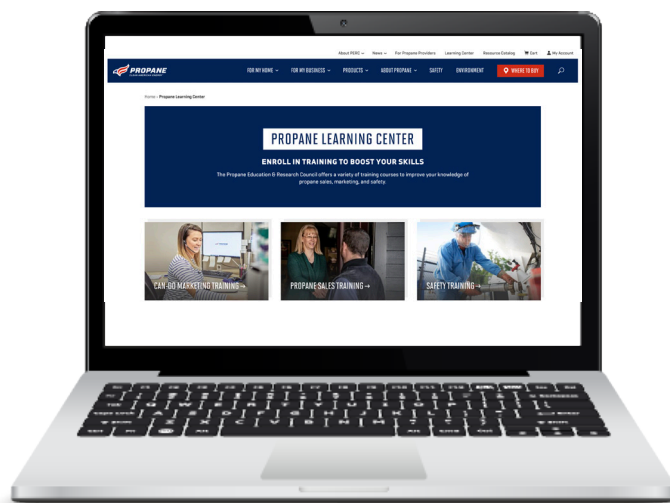
With the pandemic limiting classroom instruction and speeding the transition to digital learning, the Learning Center had more than 16,000 new users in 2020. Another 5,000 have since received professional education and training in a growing lineup of safety, sales, workforce recruitment, compliance, environmental messaging, emergency response, and market-specific topics.

Advances in safety and technical training have been particularly attractive. The Certified Employee Training Program (CETP) that has been the industry's premier safety and compliance program since its creation more than 30 years ago has been broken into smaller, function-specific modules. This change allows users to match training to the actual duties performed instead of sitting through materials that are not relevant.

Each CETP course is divided into task-based modules that can be taken as needed. For instance, CETP 2.2 Bobtail Delivery Operations includes modules on bobtail inspection, hazardous materials handling, DOT licensing, defensive driving, and vehicle parking, among other topics.

In 2020 alone, propane professionals completed 45,000 individual CETP modules and 8,000 certification exams.

"It's been exciting to see how the industry is embracing the changes in the way we are delivering education and



**PERC staff conducted a webinar recently for VAPGA members that walked them through the LMS system and provided a forum for asking questions. A recording of that webinar can be found [here](#).**

compliance material to the workforce," says Learning Management System Administrator Chris Hanson. "We're confident that the customizable system that we now have will provide an improved training experience for both current and future workforce hires."

In the first quarter of 2021, 381 propane companies joined the system to bring training to more than 3,100 employees. Participating marketers range from 10 of the largest multi-state companies all the way down to family shops with fewer than five on staff. Hanson believes the platform's flexibility to customize learning to specific preferences is driving the popularity of the Learning Center.

Many individuals are scanning the library of 400 course offerings and simply taking what appeals to them. Some companies assign set learning paths based on job duties or experience. Still others are blending PERC's curriculum with company policies and procedures, working with Hanson to create a more robust training experience. All variations can be planned, tracked, and maintained within the system.

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No two users are identical, Hanson notes. "That's the beauty of this system – you don't have to do it one way. You can use as much or as little as you want to meet your specific training goals," he explains.

Raised in a propane family business in Indiana, Dave Donahue has been doing marketer training for 25 years. As the director of code compliance and education for North Carolina Propane Gas Association, he embraces the digital enhancements that the Learning Center has brought to his classroom at the newly opened NC Technical Education Center in Raleigh.

His first class of students is learning on laptops with downloaded electronic versions of textbooks and PowerPoint presentations. His curriculum mixes CETP Basic Principles and Practices, Bobtail and Cylinder Delivery, OSHA and DOT, Personal Protective Equipment, Cathodic Protection, Static Electricity, and Mobile Crane Safety with plenty of hands-on instruction that the many tactile learners crave.

"I call it 'Frankensteining' a bunch of things from here and there. As a trainer, you're looking to use the whole palette of resources to create something unique that is

all-encompassing for the students. The Learning Center enables us to do that because it puts knowledge in people's hands and makes it easier," he says.

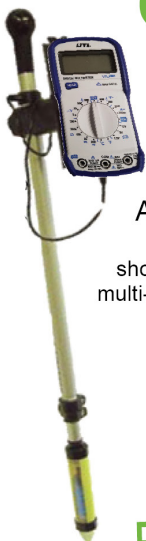
Donahue's training colleague in Ohio, Bob Herron, raves about the ability for students to link to the Learning Center after a classroom lesson to take end-of-module quizzes and get immediate results of their performance. Instructors can even examine beyond the raw score to see performance on each question and decide if more review is needed before moving on.

Herron also uses this "blended learning" approach to help new employees prepare for class with individual online learning assignments that familiarize them with basic concepts.

"I'll admit I was skeptical about the changes at first," Herron says. "You're scared that you might be replacing yourself by promoting it. But everybody agrees that they like instructor-led training best, and we're now getting the best of both."

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