



AEP Foundation funds face shield production

Shreveport -- A \$50,000 grant from the American Electric Power Foundation to the LSUS Foundation is allowing LSU Shreveport students and faculty to create components for face shields to help first responders and hospital employees work safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As the local impact of the COVID-19 pandemic became more acute, we recognized the opportunity for LSU Shreveport to leverage our new CyberCollaboratory to join a community consortium to help meet some of the personal protection needs of regional first responders and health care workers," said LSUS Chancellor Larry Clark. "The AEP Foundation provided the critical financial support needed to serve the COVID-19 needs of the Ark-La-Tex region."

The AEP Foundation is funded by American Electric Power (NYSE: AEP) and its utility operating units, including Southwestern Electric Power Co. (SWEPCO), which serves approximately 220,000 customers in Northwest Louisiana.

The LSUS CyberCollaboratory has become an impromptu 3D printing shop. LSUS senior Matt Dixon, who's majoring in digital arts, is one of the students helping produce the components. He has a personal reason for protecting those on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19. His mom, a respiratory therapist working in Shreveport-Bossier City hospitals, was exposed to the virus.

"There's just a struggle of not having the right amount of supplies to protect themselves," Dixon said. "They told her she had been exposed to patients that they didn't know had the virus. She had a little bit of a cough for a while, but they tested her, and it came out negative. She's 54 this year, and it could have been bad."

The LSUS CyberCollaboratory is a 10,000-square-foot center designed to teach all LSUS students how to use emerging technology for creative solutions to real-world problems. It was developed in part by a \$300,000 grant from the American Electric Power Foundation. Set to open this fall, the CyberCollaboratory will have a huge impact on student learning and the ability to transfer knowledge into applications, said Dr. Julie Lessiter, LSUS vice chancellor of strategic initiatives.

The grant from the AEP Foundation helped cover the cost of additional printers and supplies to produce the face shields. LSUS, Bossier Parish Community College and the nonprofit Sanctuary Arts School shared the grant.

"We care about our customers and understand how this pandemic is reshaping all of our daily lives," said Carey Sullivan, SWEPCO director of corporate communications. "SWEPCO, the American Electric Power Foundation and our employees are proud to support LSUS as its team makes face shields to assist healthcare workers and first responders."

The American Electric Power Foundation provides a permanent, ongoing resource for charitable initiatives involving higher dollar values and multi-year commitments in the communities served by AEP and initiatives outside of AEP's 11-state service area.

The foundation focuses on improving lives through education from early childhood through higher education in the areas of science, technology, engineering, math and the environment and by meeting basic needs for emergency shelter, affordable housing and the elimination of hunger. Other Foundation support may be offered to protect the environment, support healthcare and safety, and enrich life through art, music and cultural heritage.

The AEP Foundation is based in Columbus, Ohio.