

## BC Offers Testing Service

# 4 BASF Employees Set New Standard, Earn Work Ready Certificates

By Greg McDonald

Continuing Education Director

**Four employees of the BASF Catalyst plant in Attapulgus have gained the distinction of being the first persons in Decatur County to be certified by Bainbridge College as Work Ready.**

The local Work Ready Program is a cooperative venture involving the Chamber of Commerce, local government and Bainbridge College (BC). The Georgia Work Ready Program is an initiative of Governor Sonny Purdue and is being implemented by the Commission for a New Georgia and the Department of Technical and Adult Education.

The program's concept is simple. Utilizing the WorkKeys assessment system, employee skill levels are assessed in three critical areas to determine if they are ready for the work an employer requires.

Employees (or prospective employees) are tested on applied mathematics, reading for information, and locating information. The person's scores determine the certification level - platinum, gold, silver or bronze. Gold certification is equivalent to being college ready with no remediation necessary.

Of the four BASF employees assessed, one attained gold certification and three attained silver. This is quite an accomplishment for the individuals and the plant itself, said Gean Hendrix, BC's director of Business & Industry Services who presented their certificates. He congratulated the four for setting the standard for BASF and for employees throughout Decatur County to emulate.

"Decatur County can become Georgia Work Ready if business, industry, and the education system will become more involved in the process," Hendrix said, noting there is no charge for testing employees on the three critical skills areas.

BASF facility Manager Scott Pounds expressed his pride in the initiative and the drive that the four men have to attain certification and to strive to improve their situations.

"We are proud of these guys, and proud to work with Bainbridge College to support our employees. Our company will surely benefit from this."

The Georgia Work Ready Program offers numerous benefits, including increased profitability and return on investment for manufacturing companies. One Macon company reported that using WorkKeys assessment in hiring and promotions resulted in 67 percent reduction in cost and time to hire qualified candidates, 200 percent improvement in training entry-level employees, 30 percent improvement in production efficiency and 6 percent reduction in waste.

Gaining Work Ready Certification is free to Georgia residents. A person may begin the WorkKeys assessment process by calling BC's Continuing Education Division (229-248-2516). The assessment process takes about three hours. Also, skill gap training can be done at no additional charge.



### *Four Honored for Setting Record*

**Left-right are BASF Facility Manager Scott Pounds, Silver Certificate recipients Gene Maxwell, Ricky Harrison and Frank Chandler, Gold Certificate recipient Zeb DeGraw, and BC Business and Industry Services Director/Work Ready Coordinator Gean Hendrix.**