

LCC's Lucero and Herrera take first, second at Heavy Equipment Rodeo



Luna Community College's Vocational/Technical Studies students John Lucero and Tracy Herrera took first and second-place at the Associated General Contractors of America Heavy Equipment Rodeo on Friday, May 4 in Albuquerque. Lucero narrowly beat out Herrera in the excavator simulator competition by a money score of \$1,700 to \$1,638. The competitors had to load a dump truck within four-minute time. The competition is based on a monetary basis with the simulator awarding the competitor points based on how much material is loaded into the dump truck. The faster you loaded the truck, the money you earned. As part of the competition, students were deducted points if they had any safety violations or if they overloaded the dump truck.

For his win, Lucero earned a \$2,500 Heavy Equipment Operations Credential scholarship. The certification is through the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). "We had five competitors over the \$1,000 range," said

Luna Building Technology Instructor Joseph Montoya. "There was a big interest of students in our program."

Lucero is expected to earn his building technology certificate in December. After this, Lucero said he would like to start his own construction company in Las Vegas.

"I'm happy I won this scholarship," said Lucero. "I've paid for school out-of-pocket all my life so I feel blessed and grateful. It helps out a lot."

As part of the rodeo, students were able to practice on several heavy equipment machines.

According to BuildYourFuture.org, a heavy equipment operator earns an average annual salary of \$61,091. This salary does not include overtime or incentives.

For more information on Luna's Vocational/Technical Studies or Building Technology programs, contact Montoya at 505-454-2586 or at jjmontoya@luna.edu.

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