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Autry Technology Center Preparing to Launch State-Of-The-Art Culinary Arts Program

ENID, Okla. – For the first time in three years, Autry Technology Center will welcome back students to the Culinary Arts program. The program was put on hold in June 2018 so the training facility could undergo renovations.

The Culinary Arts full-time program is designed to prepare individuals to work in the restaurant and food service industry. This course of study encompasses various aspects of the culinary arts industry. The cafeteria-style facility provides opportunities that include performance in quantity food production, state-of-the-art equipment operation, banquet/catering experiences and competencies involving diverse cuisine.

Cafe Blu', the new state-of-the-art culinary arts training facility, is designed to help students gain real-world experience as they prepare for a professional career in the industry. Cafe Blu' features on-campus cafeteria-style, executive and outdoor dining options as well as a food truck, grab-and-go and opportunities for evening receptions. Autry Tech anticipates a fall 2021 opening for Cafe Blu'.

Autry Tech hired two instructors to lead the Culinary Arts program – Kelly Holder and Ryan Simpson. Both joined the Autry Tech team in April 2021 to begin curriculum development.

- Holder holds a degree in Baking and Pastry Arts from Johnson and Wales University. She has more than 20 years of experience in the culinary industry, working in country clubs, bakeries, and restaurants as both pastry chef and culinary chef. She previously taught Culinary Arts in South Carolina where she had multiple SkillsUSA state and national competitors. She also owned and operated her own bakery in South Carolina where she specialized in large scale wedding cakes and dessert receptions.
- Simpson has more than 12 years of Hospitality Experience ranging from Casual to Fine Dining, including large events and small gatherings. While in school, Simpson earned a bachelor's degree in Hotel and Restaurant Administration from Oklahoma State University, as well as an associate of occupational studies degree in Culinary Arts from the Culinary Institute of America. He has honed his skills through working in acclaimed kitchens throughout Oklahoma, Colorado, New York and Texas.

“We are looking forward to welcoming our students back to Culinary Arts!” said Mandy Mayberry, Autry Tech Director of Marketing, Communications & Recruiting. “The new training facility is truly one of a kind, allowing us to expand our reach and offer new opportunities to serve the community.”

Autry Technology Center has been a part of the Enid community since 1967 and is one of 29 CareerTech schools across Oklahoma. The center has more than 25 career programs and offers a wide variety of evening and weekend short-term courses and certifications for many diverse career fields. Autry serves nearly 16,000 individuals each year, including many area employees who receive training through the Corporate Training Department that works with over 500 local businesses each year.