



Florida Advanced Technological Education Center



NEWS from
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System Roundtable Dialogue
Exploring strategies to position Florida as a national model for system deployment in manufacturing

Florida as a national leader in driving competency-based education and training is changing the paradigm of manufacturing education. On Jan. 29, Florida Advanced Technological Education Center (FLATE) at Hillsborough Community College in Brandon will host the Manufacturing Institute—the research, education and workforce arm of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)—to review the NAM-endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System for entry-level careers in manufacturing.

This round table dialogue represents a comprehensive effort started by NAM in March, 2009, to launch a national, portable, industry-recognized credential system. The event will be held at Valpak Manufacturing Center in St. Petersburg, Fla., in conjunction with FLATE's annual National Visiting Committee meeting, and will explore strategies to position Florida as a national model for system deployment in manufacturing education.

(more)

1st add NAM-endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System Roundtable

This skills certification system shares a foundational base with the FLATE-created engineering technology degree. The system endorses a “stack” of credentials at various skill and knowledge levels that can be aligned with local educational programs. The Manufacturing Skills Standards Council Certified Production Technician (MSSC CPT) credential is part of NAM’s system. It is also the core of the FLATE-developed engineering technology degree that articulates 15 credit hours of the technical core to anyone holding a valid MSSC CPT credential.

Emily DeRocco, president of the Manufacturing Institute who will be presenting and steering key discussions at the session points to the initiative as “An investment in workforce training that produces specific credentials, merit, and a sense of accomplishment for workers, and substantiates for manufacturers that the person has the skills to succeed in the workplace.” The system validates a student or entry-level worker has achieved foundational workforce readiness and academic skills, and prepares workers with technical skills in manufacturing that enable them to enter careers in aerospace, computers, metal fabrication, food processing, pharmaceutical, transportation and logistics.

Dr. Marilyn Barger, executive director of FLATE is also cognizant of the multi-layered benefits the NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System affords. “By implementing this system we are employing industry’s voice and expertise in helping this nation provide competency-based, customized education and training for the manufacturing workforce” Barger said. NAM’s initial deployment strategy will be through the nation’s community college system. Industry, community college and workforce leaders in 22 states have begun actions or discussions to implement the credentialing system, and to align educational and manufacturing career pathways.

(more)

2nd add NAM-endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System Roundtable

DeRocco and Barger are confident that implementing this national strategy will provide manufacturers with a competitive advantage—one that ensures an educated and prepared manufacturing workforce. “If we are to right our economic ship, we must put in place the talent development strategies that prepare workers for high quality, middle class jobs and provide manufacturers with the educated and skilled workforce necessary to remain globally competitive.”

FLATE is a National Science Foundation Regional Center of Excellence, committed to ensuring Florida has a well prepared workforce for advanced and emerging technologies related to manufacturing. Created in 2004, FLATE is one of 36 Advanced Technological Education Centers in the United States funded by the National Science Foundation focused on improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and training to meet the needs of American advanced technology industries. For more information visit www.fl-ate.org.

The **NAM** is the leading advocate of a pro-growth, pro-manufacturing agenda. The NAM’s mission is to advocate on behalf of its members to enhance the competitiveness of manufacturers by shaping a legislative and regulatory environment conducive to U.S. economic growth and to increase understanding among policymakers, the media and the general public about the vital role of manufacturing in America’s economic and national security for today and in the future. For more information visit www.nam.org.

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**NAM-ENDORSED MANUFACTURING SKILLS CERTIFICATION SYSTEM
BRIEFING SUMMARY SHEET**

What: Briefing on the NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System and a Roundtable Dialogue on Deploying the System in Florida

When: January 29, 2010

Time: 8:50 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.: Tour of ValPak Manufacturing Center
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.: Certification System Discussion
11:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m.: Networking lunch

Where: ValPak Manufacturing Center
1 ValPak Avenue N, St. Petersburg, FL 33716-4102
<http://www.coxtarget.com/vmc/index.jsp>

Why: In tough economic times, with high unemployment and the loss of jobs, it is sometimes difficult to focus on skills development. In reality, we have no better time. If we are to right our economic ship, we must put in place the talent development strategies that will prepare workers for high quality, middle class jobs and provide manufacturers with the educated and skilled workforce necessary to remain globally competitive.

- Research confirms that an educated and skilled workforce is the single most critical factor in maintaining U.S. leadership in innovation and productivity—keys to our success in the global marketplace.
- There is no longer any doubt that an educated and skilled workforce is the critical asset companies look for when deciding if and where to locate new business facilities and operations.
- And, individual manufacturers look to two balance sheets to determine their strength and resilience in this volatile economy: Their fiscal balance sheet and their human capital balance sheet.
- 21st century human capital, or talent, strategies are critical to manufacturers' success:
“I advise each of my staff that every worker hired is a million-dollar investment for this company. I’m calculating that most hires are under 45 years old; we intend to keep them for at least 20 years, and our average annual salary/benefits package is \$55,000. In other words, we can’t afford to make a mistake—to hire someone without the right skills. Verifiable skills certification programs can make the difference between a good investment and a high-risk.”
- Dennis Rohrs, Human Resource Manager, Fort Wayne Metals, Inc.

- However, there is a deficit in the education and training for manufacturing careers, causing a shortage of skilled individuals who are marketable to industry.
- By deploying the NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System, we are employing industry's voice and expertise in helping this nation provide competency-based, customized education and training for the manufacturing workforce.
- Founded on ACT's National Career Readiness Certificate, the NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System will validate for employers that a student or entry-level worker has achieved foundational workforce readiness and academic skills. The credentials aligned to manufacturing-wide technical skill requirements are AWS's Certified Welder, MSSC's Certified Production Technician, and NIMS' Machining and Metalforming certifications.
- Finally, SME's Engineering Technologist certification caps our entry-level skills system.
- These "stackable" industry-recognized skills certifications prepare workers with the manufacturing technical skills that enable them to swiftly enter careers in sectors ranging from aerospace to computers, metal fabrication to food processing, pharmaceutical to transportation and logistics.
- These are the postsecondary credentials that have real value in the manufacturing workplace: for workers who need to improve their skills; for workers whose jobs may be at risk, or workers who have lost a job and need to return to the workforce; for individuals coming out of the military; and, for people moving out of welfare and into work.
- An investment in workforce training that leads to specific credentials produces both a sense of accomplishment and merit for workers, and substantiates for manufacturers that the person has the skills to succeed in the workplace.
- The multi-tiered deployment strategy for these certifications and credentials is primarily through our nation's community college system, and then will drive down to the secondary school curriculum, and up to the baccalaureate degree programs.
- Pursuing alignment in college programs will help professionalize the careers in manufacturing as high-tech, high-skill, and high-profile. Leading the way in deployment are four "deep-dive" community colleges and 4 states, funded by a \$1.5 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: Forsyth Technical Community College in North Carolina, Lorain County Community College in Ohio, Alamo Colleges in Texas, and Shoreline Community College in Washington State.
- Deployment is also underway in 18 additional states from coast to coast through the work of industry, state workforce and education leaders.