Carpentry Student Wins at National Competition

June 25, 2015 - SkillsUSA is the showcase for the best career and technical students in the nation. And one of those outstanding students is from FMTC! Alexander Hernandez, Carpentry student, won gold medals at the national competition with the best of the best.

SkillsUSA is the national organization for students in trade, industrial, technical and health occupations education. It helps students follow their passions to their ultimate careers. As a nationwide partnership of students, instructors and industry working together, SkillsUSA works to ensure America has a skilled workforce. It helps every student excel in his or her career and technical education (CTE) student organization serves more than 300,000 high school, college and postsecondary students—and their instructors—in technical, skilled, and service occupation instructional programs. CTE is learning that works for America. SkillsUSA has the active support of more than 600 corporations, trade associations, business and labor unions at the national level. Over 11.9 million people have been annual members of SkillsUSA since its founding as The Vocational Industrial Clubs of America in 1965. SkillsUSA programs teach leadership, citizenship and character development to complement technical skill training. The organization emphasizes respect for the dignity of work, ethics, workmanship, scholarship and safety.

The SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference held in Louisville, Kentucky, was a multimillion dollar event that occupied a space equivalent to 16 football fields. Over 6,000 students competed in 100 different trade, technical, and leadership fields. Nearly 1,500 judges and contest organizers from labor and management made the national event possible. The SkillsUSA Championships recognize the achievements of career and technical education students and encourage them to strive for excellence and pride in their chosen occupations.

Working against the clock and each other, the participants proved their expertise in job skills for occupations such as electronics, technical drafting, precision machining, medical assisting and culinary arts. There were also competitions in leadership skills such as extemporaneous speaking and conducting meetings by parliamentary procedures.

The contests are planned by technical committees made up of representatives of labor and management and are designed to test the skills needed for a successful entry level performance in given occupational fields. Safety practices and procedures—an area of great concern to labor and management alike—are judged and graded and constitute a portion of a contestant’s score.

Carpentry contestants had to frame walls using wood and/or steel studs; cut and install rafters, gable end trusses; and install and rig sawhorses and ladders. The 3-day competition is held to select the best of the best. Judges were impressed with his skills and wanted to make sure he didn’t lose a valuable employee to a competitor, so he made Mr. Renfroe an offer he couldn’t pass up.

Alexander Hernandez is a carpentry student at FMTC. In his or her career and technical education (CTE) student organization serves more than 300,000 high school, college and postsecondary students—and their instructors—in technical, skilled, and service occupation instructional programs. CTE is learning that works for America. SkillsUSA has the active support of more than 600 corporations, trade associations, business and labor unions at the national level. Over 11.9 million people have been annual members of SkillsUSA since its founding as The Vocational Industrial Clubs of America in 1965. SkillsUSA programs teach leadership, citizenship and character development to complement technical skill training. The organization emphasizes respect for the dignity of work, ethics, workmanship, scholarship and safety.

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Message from the Director

A Great Start

Welcome back to school students and staff members! For the first time ever, our school opens its doors to a new school year with a new name and designation as a technical college. More on that later.

No matter our name, Fort Myers Technical College (FMTC) is off to a great start, and we’re glad you’re here. As you may have noticed, our enrollment continues to rise as more and more students seek to take advantage of the many great occupational training programs our school offers. Congratulations and thank you for continuing to further your education and training here at FMTC.

I wrote here in this space last year about a study that ranked our school’s graduates as having the highest first-year earnings amongst all technical certificate graduates in the state of Florida, as well as the highest percentage of graduates employed in their field of study. Indeed, our graduates out-earn most associate of arts degree graduates by almost $10,000. Although proud of this recognition, the real take-away is that this is clear evidence of a trend across the county: the amazing value in pursuing a technical education. You are a part of this emerging trend.

Now we take the next step. A few months ago, we changed our name to better reflect the true technical postsecondary nature of our institution. We believe that this rebranding will positively impact our students, our industry-partners, and the community at large. Most of our students already earn articulated college credit for the course work they complete upon transfer to a public state or community college. We think this name change will help convince more students to pursue the technical skills-based education that will allow them to achieve their career goals while making the Southwest Florida more attractive to new businesses seeking to relocate. I hope you agree!

Finally, while you are here at FMTC, I encourage you to get involved in any number of student-based organizations that are available. SkillsUSA and the Health Occupations Student Association (HOSA) are just two of the career and technical student-based organizations which can help you become more competitive in the job market after you finish your training. Our National Technical Honor Society chapter also provides students who attain membership with service and leadership opportunities, as well as the right to apply for scholarship funds to further their postsecondary education.

Please take a few moments to look over this edition of the Soaring Scene. There are many great things going on here at our school, and we want you to know about them.

Remember, get involved and stay involved, as this will only serve to improve your future job prospects.

FMTC Recognized by Public Relations Association

FMTC recently won two 1st place Sunshine Medallion Awards from the Sunshine State School Public Relations Association (SUNSRA). The entries were judged by public relations professionals throughout the state. The awards were presented for the following projects:

- **Soaring Scene** – school newspaper and Air Conditioning, Refrigeration & Heating Technology promotional video.

AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS

Holding a nationally recognized industry certification or license in your field is a powerful tool in your job search tool kit. Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification is the most respected credential available to the automotive technician.

FMTC’s Automotive Service Technology (AST) program is accredited by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF). NATEF grants accreditation and re-accreditation to programs that comply with evaluation procedures, meets established standards, and adheres to strict policies. The program is accredited in all 8 areas: engine repair, automatic transmission transaxle, manual drive train and axles, suspension and steering, brakes, electrical/electronic systems, heating and air conditioning, and engine performance.

- Automotive Service Technology instructors, Mr. Ron Ellis, Mr. Monte Hamsher, and Mr. Todd Robarge, are all ASE Master Service Technicians who recently became recertified for five years. Mr. Hamsher and Mr. Robarge are also Advanced Engine Performance Specialist (EL1) certified. For today’s car owner, auto repair is more complicated than ever. Vehicles keep getting more complex, while technology and diagnostic tools constantly change as well. The need for competent, knowledgeable automotive professionals is imperative.

- In addition to passing an ASE Certification test, automotive technicians must have two years of on-the-job training or one year of on-the-job training and a two-year degree in automotive repair to qualify for certification. The exams are not easy. Only two out of every three test-takers pass on their first attempt. To remain ASE certified, professionals must retest every five years to keep up with ever-advancing automotive technology.

- The Automotive Service Technology program’s curriculum is aligned with both ASE and Florida Department of Education guidelines. Students have the opportunity to participate in externships at local dealerships and are prepared to take ASE certification examinations.

- Mr. Steve Hubbard, owner of Sustained Motion Car Collection and Mr. Terry Wynter, owner of Terry Wynter Auto Service Center, are both long-time supporters of FMTC students and have contributed their time and money to the AST program. For several years, they have reimbursed AST students who successfully pass ASE certification examinations.

- Visit FMTC’s website or talk to your instructor about the certifications available in your career field.

WEB STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN FORT MYERS HACKATHON

By Dr. Dante Ciolfi

From June 5-7, 2015, Fort Myers Technical College (FMTC) Web Application Development & Programming students participated in the 2nd Annual Fort Myers Hackathon. The Southwest Florida Regional Technology Partnership (www.swfrtp.org) organized the Hackathon as part of the National Civic Day of Hacking—(HackForChange.org). A Hackathon is an event that occurs over a short period of time, usually a weekend, during which teams develop a solution (hardware and/or software) to solve a problem of some sort. Hackathon teams often develop a mobile app, Web site or hardware device(s).

The FMTC team consisted of Dean Betty, Will Carta and MC Louigene. Advisors were Dr. Dante Ciolfi and Rob Mitchell. The team performed well, developing two different projects: an application to improve firefighter safety and a mobile app to improve health. The team also appeared in footage for the Hackathon on local NBC News affiliate, Channel 2!
Those of you who have attended FMTC 101 have heard me discuss our school’s attendance policies and dress code policies, so you’re aware of the importance that we put upon both. We do not place that emphasis without good reason. We do so because attendance and appearance are prime employability traits that are highly valued by perspective employers.

One of our goals as an institution is to make certain that those students we send out into the world of work are prepared to immediately step into his or her job and do it well. To be the kind of an exemplary employee we strive to create, our students must not only be able to do their job, they must also be ready and willing to comply with all the requirements of employment, including dress code and attendance policies.

Unlike a purely academic facility, FMTC has and enforces both a dress code and an attendance policy. Neither policy is intended to be punitive, but is instead intended to create an atmosphere similar to that found in the work place. As an employer does, we expect our students to come to class dressed for the job. If the program requires a specific uniform, we expect our students to arrive “dressed for work” in the program approved uniform. Fuccillo Kia is a prime example. Their service department wears a specific uniform, the sales staff has one, and the office staff is required to dress in business casual clothing. In the work world, this is HUGE. Most employers, from the US Military to McDonald’s, have some kind of dress code policy.

Attendance is very important to both the employer and you. After all, you don’t get paid if you don’t show up. Employers schedule their personnel to specific hours because those hours are important to the employer regardless of the line of work. If your boss wants you to report for work on a 7-3 shift, he won’t like it if you routinely come in at 7:20 and leave at 2:35. A 7:00 a.m. start time isn’t approximate or negotiable with most employers and neither is the clock-out time. The boss expects you to be on time, and he expects you to work your full shift. If you are routinely late for work, leave early, or if you are chronically absent, you will not remain employed for very long. FMTC, much like an employer, has specific hours during which our students are expected to be present. Much like an employer, FMTC requires students to punch in at the beginning of the “work” day and punch out at the end. If you are routinely late for class or leave early on a consistent basis, or if you’re often absent, the time will add up and will eventually impact your ability to maintain the required 90% attendance. Absences also can have a negative effect on a student’s financial aid or VA Benefits. As a technical college, we have a bit more flexibility in dealing with attendance problems than do employers. We’ll identify the issue, discuss the situation with the student, and work to find a way to help the student continue and ultimately complete the program. Employers, on the other hand, want their people on the job, on time, all day, every day. If an employee regularly fails to meet the company attendance requirements, that employee will shortly be looking for a new job.

As you clock in and out each day, I hope that it reminds you that our goal at FMTC is to not only provide the opportunity to learn a skill to obtain a job, but also to provide the opportunity to learn and retain the employability traits that will help insure that you keep a job.

Practical Nursing Graduates – June 30, 2015

Nurses are the heart of healthcare.

Meet FMTC’s Career Specialist

Dream Job – Next Exit

My name is Michele Witlin and I am FMTC’s new Career Specialist. I want to extend my sincerest gratitude to the students, faculty, and staff for welcoming me onto the Fort Myers campus. It is a privilege and a unique opportunity to work with a diverse and multi-talented group of individuals at this institution. My goal as the Career Specialist at FMTC is to continue fostering collaboration, cooperation, and communication between all students, staff and faculty, the community, and potential employers.

As your Career Specialist and an integral part of your Student Services department, you can expect these and many other services:

- Deliver comprehensive career exploration and career planning services/programs to students and alumni
- Offer individual career counseling and advisement appointments
- Provide career development, i.e. résumé, portfolio, and cover letter workshops
- Assist students with job placement that is consistent with their vocational training and career goals
- Coordinate the externship and cooperative education programs at FMTC
- Serve as a liaison between students, the community, and employers

Fostering these relationships is key to building a strong foundation between our students, community, and employers. Please feel free to contact me at any time. I can be reached through the main office at 334-4544 ext. 327 or via e-mail at michelewj@leeschools.net. If you would like to speak in person, I am always available to schedule appointments before, during, and after school.
On May 28, 2015, FMTC held its annual graduation ceremony. More than 800 people attended the ceremony at Fort Myers High School. Graduates, their families, and FMIT staff were all smiles as they paid tribute to the hard work and accomplishments of the graduating students. The graduates marched in, smiling and some crying tears of joy, as this ceremony marked a momentous milestone in their journey toward success.

For registration information call (239) 334-4544