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PRESS RELEASE

February 16, 2010

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Muskegon Area Career Tech Center's SkillsUSA welding students are assembled in this competition day photograph. They are joined by Mr. Carney, Ferris State University Welding Engineering Technology Associate Professor – Program Coordinator, Muskegon Area Career Tech Center Welding Teacher Mr. Mike Lorey, and Welding Para-Professional Mr. Dave Stibitz.

Local students win awards, advance to state-level welding contest

MUSKEGON: Students from six area schools will advance to the SkillsUSA State Welding Competition in April 2010. Ten of 14 Muskegon Area Career Tech Center students who competed in the live testing situation at the regional level won medals to quality. Students Robert Burch (Mona Shores) and Alex Keeney (Fruitport) are eligible to compete in the Gas Metal Arc event; students Mike Brooks (Mona Shores), Kyle Ash (Montague) and John Panozzo (Whitehall) qualified to compete in the Combined Welding Processes event; students Casey Brosseit (Reeths-Puffer), Aaron Swain (Reeths-Puffer), and Conor Schropp (Whitehall) are eligible for the Gas Tungsten Arc event; and Jacob Comstock (Montague) and Nick Pennell (Ravenna) qualified for the Oxy-Acetylene contest.

The students competed on February 5, 2010, in the SkillsUSA Region 5 Welding Competition held at Ferris State University. Instructors Mike Lorey and Para-Professional Dave Stibitz were very proud of the students' accomplishments.

Local business people believe the regional and statewide competitions are tremendous opportunities for students. Mark Mangione of U.A. Local 174 Plumbers, Pipefitters, Steamfitters, and Service Trades said, "The competitions are a great opportunity for students to show the skills they've learned and get excited about a career in this industry." Jim Holub of Lake Welding Supply Company said there is a great deal of value in having students experience a real-life testing situation. "The students demonstrate the same types of skills that they would for a potential employer, and they feel the same type of pressure." Holub added, "These competitions can be a real boost for student confidence. It's a great way to encourage our youth to pursue their interests in a high-wage field that faces an impending shortage of skilled workers."

SkillsUSA is a national nonprofit organization serving teachers and high school and college students who are preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations. The goal of this organization is to ensure America has a skilled work force for years to come. SkillsUSA is one of several extra-curricular Career Tech Student Organizations (CTSOs) offered by the Muskegon Area Career Tech Center. The MACTC is operated by Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD).

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