

PRESS RELEASE

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Photo Captions:

1. (regionals_group.jpg) SkillsUSA Welding Participants: (Back row) John Person, Zach Machovsky, Kyle Ash, Seth Wade, Carl Timmich, Aaron Swain, (Front row) Desmond Colvin, Katie Miles, Kody Weisner, Mike Brooks, Justin Herr, and John Rinckey
2. (johnperson.jpg) John Person of Montague placed 3rd over-all in Friday's SkillsUSA Regional Competition.
3. (justinherr.jpg) Justin Herr of Reeths Puffer placed 3rd in TIG Welding during Friday's SkillsUSA Regional Competition.
4. (kodyweisner.jpg) Kody Weisner of Reeths Puffer accepts his certificate for 1st place in the TIG Welding division.

Local students win awards, advance to state level welding contest

MUSKEGON: Reeths-Puffer Students Justin Herr and Kody Weisner, and Montague Student John Person will advance to the SkillsUSA State Welding Competition in April 2009. Herr and Weisner will compete in Tig welding (GTAW) while Person will compete in the over-all welding category. The Muskegon Area Career Tech Center (MACTC) students earned one of the top three places in their divisions at the regional competition hosted at the MACTC on Friday, February 27, 2009. They contended with students from Traverse Bay and Mecosta-Osceola Area career tech centers. Approximately 45 students competed in five different welding processes.

Other local students were also recognized for their welding skills in the live testing situation. They include Stick welding (SMAW) participant Zach Machovsky (Montague) who placed 5th, Dan Minzey (Oakridge) who placed 6th, and Desmond Colvin (Muskegon) who placed 7th. In the category of Mig welding (GMAW), Jon Rinckey (Orchard View) placed 4th, Katie Miles (Mona Shores) placed 7th, and Mike Brooks (Mona Shores) placed 8th. Tig welding (GTAW) competitors Kody Weisner (Reeths-Puffer) placed 1st, Justin Herr (Reeths-Puffer) placed 3rd, and Seth Wade (Holton) finished in 6th place. The over-all winners from the MACTC were John Person (Montague) in 3rd place, Carl Timmich (Montague) in 4th, and Kyle Ash (Montague) with 5th place.

Local businesses and trade organizations donated their time and resources to assist in judging and supervision of the event. Volunteer Judge Marc Mangione of U.A. Local 174 Plumbers, Pipefitters, Steamfitters, and Service Trades said, "The competition is 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 also volunteered his time to judge the event. He said there is a great deal of value in having students experience a real-life testing situation. "The students will be demonstrating the same types of skills that they would for a potential employer, and they will feel the same type of pressure." Holub added, "This competition 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."

Representatives from the Baran Institute of Technology from East Windsor, Connecticut, offered \$1,000 scholarships for each competitor, whether they place or not, and a \$5,000 scholarship to all 1st place winners, a \$3,000 scholarship for all 2nd place winners, and a \$2,000 scholarship for each 3rd place winner in each competitive event.

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. Currently 196 students participate in CTSOs. The MACTC is operated by Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD). ###