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Lorain County Community College Picked to Lead National Effort in Welding Education and Training

******American Welding Society Partners with LCCC on Endeavor******

Miami, FL, June 28, 2007 – Lorain County Community College has been named project leader for a \$4.9 million National Science Foundation (NSF) program establishing a National Center for Welding Education and Training on the LCCC campus. The Center will increase the number of science and engineering welding technicians to meet workforce demands.

The Center will be housed in LCCC's Manufacturing Center for Excellence in the Nord Advanced Technology Center. "It will promote a comprehensive reform in welding education by providing technologically current educational materials and professional development opportunities to two-year colleges and other educational institutions," said Duncan Estep, director of LCCC's Engineering Technologies division.

Ken Smith, of LCCC's Engineering Technologies division, will be the principal investigator and project director. He will be responsible for the overall management of the Center and the NSF grant.

"The Center will focus on strengthening the educational aspects of welding technicians. The availability of welding technicians is essential to maintaining manufacturing strength in the United States," Smith said.

"The welding industry in the United States is economically large, technically diverse, and has well-documented needs. This industry considers education and training in advanced methods and techniques for welding technicians essential to United States competitiveness in advanced manufacturing," said Elizabeth J. Teles, Ph.D., Lead Program Director for the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program at the NSF. "Lorain County Community College is well positioned to lead this national effort in welding education. The Lorain project team and partners have the expertise needed to develop and enhance welding education and training programs that address the workforce needs for the welding jobs of the future."

As the lead on the project, LCCC will collaborate with team members that include major corporations, industry associations, educational institutions, government facilities, and a professional society. The other educational institutions are: Chattanooga State Tech Community College, the College of the Canyons, Ferris State University, Milwaukee Area Technical College, The Ohio State University, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Texas State Technical College and Weber State University.

“The vision for this center is education that is driven by industry needs through a network of regional partners,” said Estep.

Teacher workshops at convenient regional locations and online courses will be supplemented by national conferences, print media, and web casts. Instructors will be able to exchange ideas bringing benefit to the Center and its members. They will be exposed to state-of-the-art equipment via demonstrations at their institutions; web casts of live demonstrations; and travel to modern factories where students will eventually work.

Joining the partner colleges is the American Welding Society (AWS), the premier non-profit professional society dedicated to the welding and joining industry. For decades, AWS has been a leader in providing welding educational programs and resources for career enhancement. In addition to hosting a variety of conferences and seminars annually, the Society publishes over 300 books, reference guides, videos, procedures, and software, as well as more than 160 AWS-developed codes and other standards produced under strict American National Standards Institute (ANSI) guidelines. AWS also has a variety of communication networks via its members, committees, and partners. These include AWS’ Welding Equipment Manufacturers Committee (WEMCO), the Ohio State University and the US Marine Corps training facility at Aberdeen, Maryland. Each of these partners adds to the Center’s effectiveness with their welding industry expertise as well as their research on virtual laboratories and virtual welder simulations.

“We are pleased to collaborate with Lorain County Community College and respected partners on such an important and significant endeavor,” said Ray Shook, AWS executive director. “With a primary mission to provide top-quality educational programs and products to strengthen the welding industry and expand career opportunities, we are proud to be involved with the establishment of the National Center for Welding Education and Training. This center not only will provide essential support to the welding technology profession, but also help to increase awareness of the critical role welding plays in the vast manufacturing sector. This is especially important considering today’s difficult recruiting environment due to the nationwide shortage of welders.”

LCCC is also the only approved provider in Ohio for the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC). Planned collaboration between the Center and the MSSC will address education reform to foster implementation of national skills standards. Allied processes such as brazing, soldering, cutting, and thermal spraying (coating) will be part of the Center’s scope of training.

“Although the focus will be technician education at community colleges, secondary and post community college education will also be supported through LCCC’s ‘model of vertical articulation’ wherein students can take coursework while still in high school, secure their associate’s degree at LCCC and their bachelor’s degree through the University Partnership,” Estep said.

National initiatives such as the National Association of Manufacturers’ (NAM) Dream It! Do It! Campaign and other groups with an emphasis on increasing the diversity of the workforce are partnering with the Center to recruit and retain students.

For more information about the National Center for Welding Education and Training, call Smith at 1-800-995-5222 (extension 7027).

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