

GROUND-BREAKING SKILLS CERTIFICATION SYSTEM WILL HELP NEW AND TRANSITIONING WORKERS PREPARE FOR GOOD JOBS

"Tough Economic Times Call for Clear Pathways to Skills in Demand," Says Engler

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 4, 2009 – The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and The Manufacturing Institute launched a new NAM-endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System that "will revolutionize education and training for the 21st century manufacturing workforce," according to NAM President and CEO John Engler.

"At a time when millions of Americans face unemployment, manufacturing jobs with excellent salaries -- and across all skill levels and sectors -- are unfilled because of the lack of qualified applicants," Engler said at a news conference today. "These tough economic times call for clear pathways to skills in demand to help new and transitioning workers prepare for good manufacturing jobs. Our education system isn't adequately preparing the next generation of workers. We must do a better job aligning education and training to the needs of employers and job seekers. Today, the NAM is endorsing a revolutionary new approach to certification and credentials that will help workers succeed in high-quality, middle class jobs," Engler said.

The NAM system will initially focus on the core, basic skills required for entry-level workers in all sectors of manufacturing, from alternative energy and computers to aerospace and life-saving pharmaceuticals. The core skills include personal effectiveness competencies such as willingness to learn and dependability; academic competencies such as applied science and presentation skills; workplace competencies such as teamwork and applied technology; and industry-wide technical competencies such as supply chain logistics and health & safety.

"Employers can be confident that individuals who earn National Career Readiness Certificates will have the core foundational skills to begin successful career paths in the manufacturing industry," said Richard Ferguson, chief executive officer and chairman of ACT, a founding partner in the NAM-endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System. "Plus, the certificate is valuable as a common standard of measurement for assessing the foundational skills and training needs of workers transitioning from other occupations," he said.

"Even in this economic downturn, the skills of our workforce remain a top strategic priority and the most important driver of business success," said Donald A. McCabe, senior vice president, Corning Inc. "Today's workforce requires more education and higher level skills due to the growing technical demands of the modern manufacturing workplace. I believe our nation's community colleges have an important role to play in addressing these challenges. Deploying the NAM-endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System through the community college system will be critical to their success," he said.

"Today's challenges include helping dislocated and unemployed workers quickly reconnect with new jobs," added Emily DeRocco, president of The Manufacturing Institute, the NAM's research, education and workforce affiliate that is driving the NAM certification system. "The career and educational pathways mapped to this Manufacturing Skills Certification System are the fast track to reemployment. At the same time, we cannot lose sight of the importance of closing the skills gap if our nation is to compete successfully in the global marketplace and remain a world leader in innovation. This new tool provides a solution to our talent development needs," she said.

Also participating in the announcement were Dr. Roy Church, president, Lorain County Community College, Ohio, and Tommye Dale Favre, executive director of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. Church said, "The alignment of industry-recognized skills certifications to degree programs in our nation's community colleges ensures our graduates

are equipped with the skills needed to be successful in careers across the manufacturing economy."

Favre emphasized, "In today's economy, many displaced workers need the quickest route possible back to employment. State and local workforce investment agencies should be providing tuition assistance for transitioning workers to gain industry-recognized skills for new employment and advancement opportunities."

The new system of skills certifications maps to both career pathways across the manufacturing economy and to educational pathways in postsecondary education. These pathways will be deployed through community colleges to provide students and transitioning workers with industry-recognized skills certifications that are educational credentials with real value in the workplace.

The following market leaders in setting educational and skills standards for entry-level workers have partnered with the NAM and The Manufacturing Institute for the NAM-Endorsed Skills Certification System:

- **ACT, Inc.** is an independent, not-for-profit organization that serves as a worldwide leader in educational research and measurement expertise. Its solutions include the National Career Readiness Certificate.
- **Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC)** is an industry-led training, assessment and certification system focused on the core skills and knowledge needed by the nation's production workers.
- **The National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS)** sets skills standards for the precision manufacturing industry, certifies individual skills against the standards and accredits training programs that meet NIMS quality requirements.
- **The American Welding Society (AWS)** leads the way in supporting welding education and technology development in manufacturing and construction.
- **The Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME)** is dedicated to building a manufacturing workforce pipeline, supporting current practitioners and the professional credentials that validate them.

For more information about the NAM-Endorsed Skills Certification System, visit

www.nam.org/institute.