



5603 34<sup>th</sup> St. W., Bradenton, FL 34210

Contact: Maura C. Howl, APR

941.751.7900, ext 2095

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[howlmc@manateeschools.net](mailto:howlmc@manateeschools.net)

## ***MTI victory at Florida SkillsUSA***

***(Bradenton, FL—May 5, 2011)*** The 2011 Florida SkillsUSA Leadership and Skills Conference came to a celebratory close at the Manatee Civic Center last night with Manatee Technical Institute raking in the medals.

Over 1,700 students and supporters from across the state convened to see the winners announced and medals awarded for the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. No other school came close to winning the number of medals won by Manatee Technical Institute: 227 medals (146 gold, 48 silver and 33 bronze).

Digital Domain Media Group and Ring Power were some of the big names among the over 200 representatives from business and industry who volunteered their time as judges for the state event. Many companies generously donated tools and other items as gifts for the winners.

Over 1,300 students from 83 high schools, technical centers and colleges from across the state competed in 188 skills and leadership contests—the largest number of contests and greatest number of schools competing the conference has ever had. Each contest had two divisions (high school and college/postsecondary) and some were team events.

Tim Lawrence, the national SkillsUSA executive director, attended the conference this year. The three-day (May 2-4) competition was hosted by MTI.

Among the contests with the stiffest competition in which college/postsecondary MTI students medaled were Architectural Drafting, Automotive Service Technology, Computer Maintenance Technology, Cosmetology, Extemporaneous Speaking, Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVAC-R), Job Interview, Major Appliance Technology, and Marine Service Technology. For high school students, they were Facial Specialties, Firefighting, Job Skill Demonstration A, Nail Care, and Web Design.

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The gold medalists, as well as other qualifying students from MTI, will advance to the national championships being held in Kansas City, Missouri, in June. They will represent MTI and the State of Florida and compete for the national title in their skill or leadership area.

The SkillsUSA contests are the most important opportunity that students have to compete against their peers and demonstrate their skills. This is the eighth year in row that MTI has come out on top at the state level. For the past seven years, MTI has exceeded all other schools by winning the most medals in the nation.

SkillsUSA is an international organization that promotes excellence, employability skills, and ethics to students in career and technical education to better prepare them for successful careers.

#### **About Manatee Technical Institute**

Manatee Technical Institute is fully accredited by the Council on Occupational Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It is a postsecondary career and technical education center under the School District of Manatee County offering over 40 career preparation programs. The mission of Manatee Technical Institute is to meet and exceed our community's training and educational expectations. MTI is a 2007 Tampa Bay Business of the Year, and its students have won more SkillsUSA medals than any other school in the nation for the past seven years.

**Photo 1:** MTI student Mike Schaapveld wins first place in Firefighting, college/postsecondary division, 2011 FL-SkillsUSA.

**Photo 2:** MTI students Vanessa Perservil (left), Shakel Albritton, and Michelle Gonzalez-Ortiz (right) were awarded gold in the high school division of Occupational Health and Safety.

**Photo 3:** MTI students Geoffrey Burmann (left) wins bronze and Alfred Torres (right) wins gold in Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVAC-R) in a stiff competition at the college/postsecondary level.

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