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## ***MTI Wins Most SkillsUSA Medals for 7<sup>th</sup> straight time!***

*(Bradenton, FL—June 28, 2010)* For the seventh straight year, Manatee Technical Institute students won more medals than any other school in the nation at the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual SkillsUSA Championships in Kansas City. Of the 942 medal awarded, Florida students took home 109 of them. MTI students alone won 61.

MTI brought home 25 gold, 23 silver and 13 bronze medals. The community may go to <http://www.skillsusa.org/compete/results.shtml> to see a complete list of winners.

“Everyone’s a winner!” exclaimed MTI director Mary Cantrell, PhD. “They didn’t get there unless they were already a winner. [They had to have won first in the state to qualify.] Only two percent of SkillsUSA members make it to nationals.”

The SkillsUSA Championships are a showcase for the best career and technical education students in the nation. Students work against the clock and each other, proving their expertise in occupations like air conditioning, entrepreneurship, criminal justice, and web design. According to students who compete, the SkillsUSA Championships are like the Olympics for career and technical education.

One of the five new contests this year was Welding Art Sculpture, and MTI student Wesley Johnson took the bronze.

About 40 MTI students volunteered for the SkillsUSA community service event hosted by Timberland PRO on the last day of the conference, June 25. Community service is highly valued by SkillsUSA. This year, students worked on several projects including building a bicycle trail, constructing a bridge, putting up siding, and creating a new community garden.

The SkillsUSA Championships began in 1967 and has grown to over 5,600 students competing in 96 different skill, technical and leadership fields. Nearly 1,500 judges and contest organizers from labor and management make the national contests possible. Contest competencies are set by industry.

This year, seven of MTI's faculty and staff served on the National Education Team, and Cantrell served on the National Technical Team.

One of the highlights of this year's Championships was a \$10,000,000 donation by Lowe's.

SkillsUSA is partnership of students, teachers and industry representatives working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. The philosophy of the Championships is to reward students for excellence, to involve industry in directly evaluating student performance and to keep training relevant to employers' needs.

The Championships were held June 21 through 25. The theme for this year's contests was "Champions at Work, Connecting the Opportunities."

*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 has won more SkillsUSA medals than any other school in the nation for the past seven years.*

Photo 1: Occupational Health & Safety GOLD—MTI students Arika McCormack, Sonia Molina, Christopher Ryan, and Jose Rodriguez won first in the nation in the college/postsecondary category of the Occupational Health and Safety – Single competition.

Photo 2: Entrepreneurship SILVER—MTI students Ricardo Fontanez, Cedanio Bacon, Jason Hrnak, and Joshua Barber won second in the nation in the college/postsecondary category of the Entrepreneurship competition. They plan to open their web design business in Bradenton next month.

Photo 3: 46<sup>th</sup> Annual SkillsUSA Opening Ceremony in Kemper Arena, Kansas City, Missouri

Photo 4: Bird's eye view of several SkillsUSA competitions in action at Bartle Hall, Kansas City

Photo 5: Up close—MTI student Joshua Sosa competing in Automotive Technology