

**MTI Contact:** Maura C. Howl, APR 941.751.7900, ext 2095 [howlmc@manateeschools.net](mailto:howlmc@manateeschools.net)

**SMP Contact:** E.F. (Gene) Sweeney 941.377.1451

[genesweeney@sarasotamedicalproducts.com](mailto:genesweeney@sarasotamedicalproducts.com)

## **MTI Drafting Students Doing Work for Sarasota Medical Products**

Business-Education partnership win-win for both

*(Bradenton, FL—December 10, 2010)* Students in the mechanical drafting program at Manatee Technical Institute are doing drawings for Sarasota Medical Products as part of a partnership that is a win-win for both the students and the manufacturer. Students are getting real work experience while in school. SMP is developing the ground work for future employees that know their product.

“This is a very exciting collaborative effort between the educational and business community, especially in providing skilled job opportunities for MTI graduates and others in the Manatee/Sarasota area,” said Walter Leise, Sr., Co Founder and Vice President of Product Development of Sarasota Medical Products, Inc.

Aspiring mechanical drafters in the Manatee Tech program are honing their skills creating drawings using AutoCAD and SolidWorks 3D CAD software. SMP plans to use the drawings for manufacturing purposes, as well as for the patent approval process for product development.

Michael Brandenburg is the lead student on the project. “I lucked out getting this, ‘cause one of the other students left because he got a job,” said the 25-year-old Brandenburg. “This is giving me practical experience of what I’m going to do—they’re going to make what I’m drawing.”

Students go back and forth between the school and the manufacturing site. “For students to have the opportunity to learn manufacturing best practices first hand gives them experience to take with them into the job market,” said Ralph Vincent, drafting instructor at Manatee Tech. “It is also allowing the program to earn some money to send students to national competition in the spring.” The school is earning \$100 per set of drawings.

Brandenburg has been working at a bookstore since he graduated from Palmetto H.S. seven years ago. “I want to make a profession out of drafting,” he said. When he finishes the MTI program in the spring, he hopes to land a job with SMP.

The start-up manufacturer plans to add 60 jobs over the next five years. The jobs promise an average annual wage to exceed the county average.

### **About Sarasota Medical Products**

Sarasota Medical Products (SMP) develops ostomy and wound care products for the healthcare community. The early-stage company was founded by key developers of the products and processes currently being offered by the global leaders in wound and ostomy care. SMP has developed four new products that will compete for market share in the advanced wound care market and a new coupling system to compete in the global ostomy market. The SMP expansion

is made possible in part from a \$360,000 incentive grant from Sarasota County. Contact E.F. (Gene) Sweeney 941.377.1451 for more details on SMP.

(more)

**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.

###