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Student Wins Silver Medal in International Automotive Service Competition

Leesburg, Va., March 25, 2010 – Proving to be one of the best in the world, Daniel Lehmkuhl of San Luis Obispo, Calif., earned a silver medal at the recent WorldSkills Americas Competition in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Lehmkuhl competed in the automotive technology competition against contestants from 12 countries in a four-day competition that took place March 10-13. The first-ever WorldSkills Americas competition was held in conjunction with the Brazil national competitions. Participants from 12 countries entered competitions in 20+ trade areas. Twenty-eight countries sent trade experts and technical and official delegates to observe and assist with the management of the competitions. The National Service for Industrial Training (SENAI) in Brazil hosted the event.

Daniel Lehmkuhl was selected to attend WorldSkills Americas after medaling in the national SkillsUSA Championships competition in Kansas City, Mo., in June 2009. This multi-million dollar event occupies a space equivalent to 15 football fields. In 2009, there were more than 5,400 contestants in 91 separate events. Nearly 2,000 judges and contest organizers from labor and management make the national event possible.

The technical aspects of the competition were extremely challenging. Daniel was tested in seven areas—six of which involved cars not sold in the United States. Each test lasted a grueling three hours and presented contestants with multiple problems with the vehicle or engine. Critical thinking skills had to be used to diagnosis and repair the problem.

- A-Petrol engine management systems on a Ford Focus
- B- Electrical systems on a Fiat Linea (not sold in USA)
- C- Engine Mechanical on a Volkswagen 1.6L engine (not sold in USA)
- D-Diesel engine management systems on a Chevrolet truck with a 2.8L engine (not sold in USA)
- E-Transmission systems on a Peugeot 207 (not sold in USA)
- F-Brake systems on a Renault Megane (not sold in USA)
- G-Suspension and Steering on a Mitsubishi Pajero TR4 (not sold in USA)

With access to only one vehicle, the Ford Focus, to prepare for this competition, Daniel had to overcome challenges not faced by the other international students.

“I am honored to have represented the United States in this amazing competition,” Lehmkuhl said. “It truly was the most incredible experience of my life so far, and it wouldn't have been possible without the support of my advisors, my sponsors, and most importantly, my family.”

Lehmkuhl is a student at Cuesta College and resides in San Luis Obispo. Technical experts lent their support to the competition, including Kelly Caudle, Stanly Community College; Ray Connolly, DRS Technologies; Pat Klarecki, Ferris State University; Scott Norman, Pittsburg State University; and Rob Tobias, Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. Rizzoli's Automotive and Perry Ford sponsored Lehmkuhl in the WorldSkills Americas Competition.

ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) supports the automotive service technology and collision repair contestants on SkillsUSA WorldTeam and will be sponsoring Lehmkuhl during the WorldSkills Competition in London in October 2011. Lowe's Companies Inc. is the Anchor Sponsor for SkillsUSA WorldTeam.

SkillsUSA is a national nonprofit organization of students, teachers and industry, working together to ensure America has a skilled work force. SkillsUSA helps high school and college students enrolled in career and technical education programs to excel by teaching employability skills such as communication, problem solving and leadership in conjunction with their trade, technical and service occupations skills. The association's annual membership exceeds 300,000 students and instructors in more than 4,000 schools and colleges in every state, three territories and the District of Columbia. SkillsUSA is a member of WorldSkills International, based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, which conducts the biennial WorldSkills Competition.

For more information about the WorldSkills Americas Competition, visit <http://www.skillsusa.org/compete/worldskillsamerica.shtml> or about SkillsUSA, visit www.skillsusa.org, or contact Tom Holdsworth at 703-737-607, tholdsworth@skillsUSA.org or Jane Short at 703-737-0612, jshort@skillsusa.org.

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