



NEWS RELEASE

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**TOYOTA'S JIM LENTZ BECOMES SkillsUSA's "CHAMPION OF THE YEAR"**

**Event Highlights Corporate Support for Career and Technical Education**

Leesburg, Va. November 9 – Jim Lentz, president and chief operating officer of Toyota Motor Sales (TMS), U.S.A. Inc. received the 2011 SkillsUSA Champion of the Year award on the evening of Friday, November 4, 2011 during a ceremony at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City. Representatives from 36 corporations and organizations attended the event.

The SkillsUSA Champion of the Year award honors the leadership of a corporate chief executive doing exemplary work in the creation and promotion of America's highly skilled workforce. The award also recognizes the honoree for the corporation's involvement in promoting and supporting career and technical education (CTE).

"Toyota supports a wide variety of worthwhile organizations and events throughout the country, but few are as dear to our hearts as SkillsUSA," Lentz said during his acceptance speech. "My hope for all SkillsUSA students is that you find that higher purpose in your work, and that all of you in this room tonight be proud of the fact that you're part of a great organization that improves lives and is indeed creating a better world."

"Since 1988, Toyota Motor Sales has partnered with SkillsUSA, sponsoring multiple events and activities," said Tim Lawrence, executive director of SkillsUSA. "Toyota has provided significant leadership, expertise and equipment to the SkillsUSA Championships, hired SkillsUSA graduates at its dealerships and corporate offices and has been a long-time leader on the SkillsUSA Youth Development Foundation." Lawrence went on to say "Jim has kept Toyota on track during some of the most difficult times the company has faced. SkillsUSA is grateful that Toyota's support for SkillsUSA – and America's skilled workforce – has never wavered."

A congratulatory letter from Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour also cited Toyota's support for education: "As we have already seen in Mississippi, Toyota Motor Sales and its partners are valuable supporters of education and workforce development, which are so critical to building a successful future. Training our youth to excel at highly skilled jobs is a priority we share."

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Lentz received additional written acknowledgement from elected officials including: Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), chairman, U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee; Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), ranking member on the Senate HELP Committee; Representative Jim Langevin (D-RI), co-chair of the U.S. House of Representatives CTE Caucus; and the governors of Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky and Texas. Senator Harkin wrote: "There is nothing more important than investing in our country's future and your continued efforts to prepare and educate the young adults has not gone unnoticed." Senator Enzi wrote: "Jim, You are being recognized with this award because you share the SkillsUSA commitment for the future of our nation . . . You are making a difference in more lives than you will ever know."

Among the companies honoring Jim Lentz and TMS: Interstate Batteries; Aspen Marketing Services; Air Products; Dealer Tire; Snap-on; ADP, Cobalt and Digital Motorworks Inc.; ASE (Automotive Service Excellence); Metro Traffic; Bosch; Carhartt; Fraser Communications; GS Marketing; Dentsu and Attik; and Irwin Tools.

### **About SkillsUSA**

SkillsUSA is a nationwide partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. It is a nonprofit education association serving high school and postsecondary public career and technical education. CTE is learning that works for America. SkillsUSA teaches employability skills in coordination with technical instruction for 130 occupations in areas including manufacturing, construction, information technology and human services. SkillsUSA serves over 320,000 members annually and has the active support of more than 1,100 corporations, trade associations, businesses and labor unions at the national level. SkillsUSA is organized into more than 17,000 sections in 54 state and territorial associations. Over 10.5 million people have been members of SkillsUSA since its founding as The Vocational Industrial Clubs of America in 1965. For more information, go to [www.skillsusa.org](http://www.skillsusa.org).

### **About Toyota Motor Sales (TMS), U.S.A. Inc.**

Toyota Motor Sales (TMS), U.S.A., Inc. is the marketing, sales, distribution and customer service arm of Toyota, Lexus and Scion. Established in 1957, TMS markets products and services through a network of nearly 1,500 Toyota, Lexus and Scion dealers which sold more than 1.76 million vehicles in 2010. Toyota directly employs nearly 30,000 people in the U.S. and its investment here is currently valued at more than \$18 billion.

For more information about Toyota, visit [www.toyota.com](http://www.toyota.com), [www.lexus.com](http://www.lexus.com), [www.scion.com](http://www.scion.com) or [www.toyotaneewsroom.com](http://www.toyotaneewsroom.com).

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