



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 25, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

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SkillsUSA National Conference Moving to Louisville in 2015

Leesburg, Va., January 16, 2008 – SkillsUSA, a national organization of career and technical education students, instructors and business partners announced today that it will move its National Leadership and Skills Conference to Louisville, Ky., for six years beginning in 2015. The organization has grown into one of the largest student groups in the country. Its annual conference and SkillsUSA Championships has been held in Kansas City since 1994. Since then, registration has grown from 6,458 to more than 8,841. It is estimated over 14,000 people attended the conference in 2007 and as many as 18,000 will participate in 2015. The SkillsUSA national conference – then called the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA) – was held in Louisville from 1982 – 1984 and from 1991 – 1993.

“Our national conference and SkillsUSA Championships is the nation’s biggest and best showcase for career and technical education students and the skilled work force it prepares. We have an obligation to our members and sponsors to keep it growing,” said Tim Lawrence, executive director of SkillsUSA. “We look forward to being back in Louisville. As we plan for our continued growth, we know we will need larger convention facilities and over 6,000 hotel rooms nearby. Louisville meets those needs. And, the support of local education, business and industry is very important so we look forward to renewing old friendships and making some new ones,” Lawrence said. “SkillsUSA will use the next several years to begin transitioning to the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville.”

“Louisville won a competitive bid process, which attracted five other cities along the way all vying to become the next home to the SkillsUSA Championships,” said Shelly Coates, associate director for conference management services. “We have made this agreement seven years out to be sure the dates and space are there for SkillsUSA when we need them.”

More than 14,500 people—including students, teachers and business partners—are expected to participate in the weeklong event in 2008 and projected registration in 2015 is over 12,000. Participation could exceed 18,000. The SkillsUSA Championships currently occupies a space equivalent to 18 acres and could expand to 22.4 acres when the conference arrives in Louisville in 2015.

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled work force. The organization serves more than 285,000 students and instructors annually, with 15,000 school chapters in 54 state and territorial associations. More than 15,600 instructors and administrators are professional members of SkillsUSA.

For more information about SkillsUSA, visit www.SkillsUSA.org.



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Expanding SkillsUSA National Conference to Move From Kansas City in 2015

Leesburg, Va., January 16, 2008 – SkillsUSA, a national organization of career and technical education students, instructors and business partners announced today that in 2015 its National Leadership and Skills Conference will move from Kansas City, Mo., to Louisville, Ky. During the past 13 years, while holding its annual national conference in Kansas City, SkillsUSA has grown into one of the largest student groups in the country. The conference’s phenomenal growth requires more convention space in a central location and more hotel rooms nearby. Space availability is the reason for the move.

“SkillsUSA loves Kansas City. We’ll be here for seven more years and we’d love to come back,” said Tim Lawrence, executive director of SkillsUSA. “What we had to consider is our mission to prepare America’s skilled work force. Our national conference and SkillsUSA Championships is the nation’s biggest and best showcase for career and technical education students and the skilled work force it prepares. We have an obligation to our members and sponsors to keep it growing,” Lawrence said. “During our time here, our need for floor space for the Championships alone has grown 45 percent. By 2014, at our rate of growth we could use more than twice the space we did in 1994 if the space were available. And, our conference registration will nearly have doubled in the same time so SkillsUSA will need 6,000 hotel rooms nearby.”

“Our conference has had wonderful support and success in Kansas City for the past 13 years and we’re looking forward to the next seven,” said Gary Diehl, chief operating officer and corporate treasurer of SkillsUSA. “Staying 20 years in one location is very unusual for a national conference. In large part, SkillsUSA has stayed in Kansas City because of the support of hundreds of local businesses and schools. There have been many benefits to Kansas City as well. We’ve introduced hundreds of thousands of people to Kansas City and by 2014, our conference will have brought in nearly \$240 million to the local economy. We’ve even brought in other conventions. SkillsUSA has become – and will continue to be – part of the Kansas City community.”

MORE

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NEWS RELEASE

SkillsUSA to Move National Conference

Page 2

Since 2000, the Kansas City Metropolitan Area SkillsUSA Program has been at work in the city area schools to benefit local career and technical education students and instructional programs. More than 5,000 students have participated and graduates have started careers at more than 43 large and small local employers. Among the many goals of the program: establishing and carrying out leadership activities; and, building stronger industry partnerships between the schools and local industry including internships and work-study programs. SkillsUSA plans to keep this program going after the conference moves.

“SkillsUSA will continue to be part of the Kansas City community,” said Lawrence. “Our schools program will keep on going and I’m sure it will continue the kinds of community service activities SkillsUSA conducts here every year. SkillsUSA has counted on over 750 businesses, unions and schools in Kansas City and we’ll continue to count on them in the years ahead. As far as SkillsUSA is concerned, they’re friends for life.”

The SkillsUSA National Leadership Conference has grown since its arrival in 1994, when a registration of 6,458 required 16,000 hotel room nights. The SkillsUSA Championships that year comprised 54 contests, 400 corporate and labor sponsors and required 10 acres (430,000 square feet) of floor space. In 2007, the conference had grown to 8,841 registrants requiring 24,998 hotel room nights. The championships comprised 87 contests, 1,200 corporate and labor sponsors and required 18 acres (792,000 square feet) of floor space. By 2014, SkillsUSA projects it will have 11,730 registrants requiring 30,000 hotel room nights (6,000 rooms) within a half-hour driving/bussing radius from the conference site. At the current rate of expansion, the SkillsUSA Championships would need 22.4 acres of floor space in a central location. That space is neither available now nor projected to be available in Kansas City in 2014.

The SkillsUSA Championships currently are held in H. Roe Bartle Hall, Municipal Auditorium, American Royal and in hotels around the downtown area. Students work against the clock and each other, proving their expertise in occupations like electronics, computer-aided drafting, precision machining, medical assisting and culinary arts. Contests are run with the help of industry, trade associations, and labor organizations, and test competencies are set by industry.

Leadership contestants demonstrate skills including extemporaneous speaking and conducting meetings by parliamentary procedure. The competitions are open to the public and free of charge.

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