



NEWS RELEASE

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Students Traveled to Japan to Compete in International Competition

Leesburg, Va., November 30, 2007—Every two years, hundreds of young people from 46 member countries (or regions) compete in the prestigious WorldSkills Competition. Considered “the best of the best,” these contestants competed for four days in 47 occupational skill areas from economic sectors including manufacturing, information technology, transportation, construction and services. Accompanied by their teachers, trainers and industry technical experts, these young people competed before the public in contests run and judged by industry using demanding international standards. The 39th international event was held November 14-21 in Japan’s Numazu City, Shizuoka Prefecture.

TeamUSA returned winning two Medallions of Excellence (receiving at least 500 out of a possible 600 points). The two winners were: Elisa Graybill (Hairdressing) of Freeburg, Pennsylvania and Chance Pollo (Welding) of Glenrock, Wyoming. Chance also won “Best in Nation” for attaining the highest score of the U.S. contestants. The four other members of TeamUSA were: Phillip Lord (Autobody Repair) of Granger, Indiana; Chance Hendrix (Car Painting) of Claremore, Oklahoma; David Moreno (Plumbing) of Houston, Texas; and, Doug Lavin (Refrigeration) of Westmont, Illinois. Although some of the members did not place, it was an honor to have been eligible to compete in such a prestigious competition.

Technical experts for TeamUSA included: Terry Angell (Autobody Repair), instructor at Warren Occupational Technical Center in Lakewood, Colorado; Rodney Bolton (Car Painting), instructor at the Center of Applied Technology North in Severn, Maryland; Manuel Rodriguez (Hairdressing), trainer for Pivot-Point International in Chicago, Illinois; Phil Campbell (Plumbing), apprenticeship instructor for the UA in Washington, DC; Steve Allen (Refrigeration), apprenticeship instructor for the UA in Washington, DC; and, Edward Bohnart (Welding), Welding Education and Consulting in Appleton, Wisconsin.

Officials for TeamUSA included: Mark Claypool (Team Leader), VP of Operations, VeriFacts Automotive in St. Charles, Illinois; Pete Carey (Official Delegate), State Association Director for New Jersey; and, Don Hatton (Technical Delegate), President, Hatton Enterprises in Tampa, Florida

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Organizations supporting United States' participation in the WorldSkills Competition included: American Welding Society; Atlas Welding Accessories, Inc.; Bosch Power Tools; ESAB Welding and Cutting Products; Farouk; Fibre-Metal Products; G.A.L. Gage Company; Hobart Institute of Welding Technology; Hobart Welding Products; Hornell Speedglass; Hyd-Mech; IRWIN Tools; LAPCO Electric Manufacturing Company; Lincoln Electric Company; Miller Electric Manufacturing Co., Inc.; National Auto Body Council (member companies and individuals); Northrop Grumman Ship Systems; Phoenix International Inc.; Pivot Point International, Inc.; Servo Robot Corporation; Smith Equipment Company; Snap-on; Timberland; Torit Products-Donaldson Company; Triangle Engineering; United Association Local 72; United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada; and, Welding Education and Consulting.

Also attending the event with the team were: George Bliss, Chairman, World Plumbing Council; Jerry Utrachi, President, American Welding Society; Crystal Gutshall, Cosmetology instructor at Sun Area Technical Center in New Berlin, Pennsylvania; and, Russell Pontarolo, Welding instructor at Eastern Wyoming College in Casper, Wyoming.

The WorldSkills organization recognizes SkillsUSA as the authorized organization to supply competitors for the international competition from the United States. Currently, the United States government does not sponsor the competitors' training or travel costs and a competitor and competition must have support from business and industry to participate.

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled work force. The organization helps each student excel by augmenting their technical education with training in leadership, teamworking skills and in citizenship and character development. SkillsUSA serves more than 285,000 students and instructors annually. The organization has more than 15,000 sections in 54 state and territorial associations. More than 15,000 instructors and administrators are professional members of SkillsUSA.

For more information about TeamUSA and the daily updates and photos, go to <http://www.skillsusa.org/compete/teamusa.shtml>.

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