

# KENTUCKY

## Career and Technical Education



**FFA Members  
Helping Others**



**Kentucky Secondary  
Welding Students  
get noticed**



**TRACK's First Year Deemed Successful  
as Plans to Expand Move Forward**



## 2014 Ford AAA Student Auto Skills Competition

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# Associate Commissioner's Notes

Greetings CTE Champions!

I hope the summer season has proven to be a time for you to relax and re-charge your batteries for what I consider to be one of the most exciting school years to come for Career and Technical Education.

For years we have waited for the opportunity to be recognized for the valuable contributions we have made to the education of our students by the entire education community.

I feel safe in saying that our time has arrived. More than ever CTE is playing a vital and growing role in preparing our students for their careers after high school, both in the workforce and in postsecondary endeavors.

We are seeing ever-increasing percentages of students who are college and/or career ready and we know that CTE is contributing greatly to those increases.

Others are now seeing what we have known for decades; the true value of CTE.

For those who attended the 2014 Statewide Career and Technical Education Summer Program, you saw the debut of a set of new videos commissioned by the Kentucky Association of Career and Technical Education that includes comments from students, teachers and administrators about the value of CTE.

These videos represent a new set of tools that will be moving throughout multiple social media outlets spreading the word about Kentucky CTE.

This is just the beginning of a year in which we will boost our outreach efforts to inform as many people as we can of the amazing things going on in our educational sector today.

In the past I have told you that we are poised to take the lead nationally in the promotion and implementation of CTE. That time is now and I hope all of you will join in the effort.

Thanks for all you do and I look forward to the best school year yet. Remember, CTE impacts everybody, everywhere, every day, period!

Sincerely,  
Dale Winkler  
Associate Commissioner –  
Office of Career and Technical Education



# Upcoming CTE Events

## August

**State Board of Education Meeting**  
August 7, Frankfort, KY.

**SkillsUSA State Directors meeting**  
August 13, Louisville, Ky.

**The Kentucky State Fair**  
August 14-24, Louisville, Ky.

## September

**Kentucky Association of School Councils (KASC) Conference**  
September 16-17, Louisville, KY.

Events to be listed in the Fall CTE Newsletter calendar should be submitted no later than August 31, 2014. See below for contact information.



Kentucky Career and Technical Magazine is published quarterly by the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education. For more information about this publication or featured items, contact Tim Thornberry at [tim.thornberry@education.ky.gov](mailto:tim.thornberry@education.ky.gov) or call (502) 564-1270 extension 4229.

All photos and stories by Tim Thornberry unless noted otherwise.

# 2014 Ford AAA Student Auto Skills Competition

For high school automotive technology students, the Ford/AAA Student Auto Skills Competition is the “Superbowl” of auto-knowledge competitions. So it was only fitting that this year’s event was held in the “Superbowl” of auto venues, the Kentucky Speedway.

Under the backdrop of one of the premiere racing facilities in the country, 10 two-person teams, representing secondary auto-tech programs from across the state, participated in this extensive test of knowledge and speed vying for prizes, scholarship money and a chance to represent Kentucky at the National Ford/AAA Student Auto Skills Competition held in Dearborn, Mich., at Ford’s World Headquarters.

Todd Nickens serves as the automotive technology academic consultant for the Office of Career and Technical Education. He said the competition is viewed – both in Kentucky and across the nation -- as one of the top indicators of automotive technology knowledge and excellence in the classroom when it comes to the auto tech programs.

“These are the best of the best auto tech students from our Career and Technical Education system,” he said. “These students are gaining valuable experience by competing and will likely have bright futures in the automotive industry if that is what they choose to do.”

Nickens added that with the complexity of today’s modern automobile engines, getting a start at the secondary level is critical in setting a student on a path to success in this field.

Cheryl Parker, the corporate public affairs manager for AAA, said for that organization, which is also involved in car care, the competition is very important in helping to develop the auto industry.

“This is the future. These are students that could very well be working in our car care facilities and by partnering with Ford we’re really helping give them the support they need in being the automotive leaders of tomorrow,” she said.

Parker added it’s exciting to think about how far the competition will take the students and noted how important it is to have them start in high school to take advantage of the job opportunities that will be available to them.

“You could see it when they arrived; the students wanted to be and do their best and it doesn’t stop here,” she said. “They will continue with this attitude and thirst for knowledge throughout their careers. There are so many opportunities available to them.”

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is projecting continued job growth in the auto-tech sector through 2022, and noted that job opportunities for qualified jobseekers should be very good.

Fred Terry is the senior regional manager for AAA Care-Bob



*As more highly skilled manufacturing jobs are becoming available, the realization that there is a shortage of a new generation of skilled workers has prompted many businesses to “grow their own.”*

Sumerel Tire and Service Centers located throughout the Cincinnati area. He said the number of technician jobs that will be available in the next few years is substantial.

“In five to 10 years, we feel like there is going to be a great need for certified, especially master technicians,” he said. “In our company, we have 31 locations and probably the average age of our master technicians is 55 years old. I don’t think it’s just us but it’s throughout the entire industry. There’s going to be a huge shortage of qualified technicians. I think there are big opportunities coming up and there’s the potential for these young people to make a lot of money.”

Terry also said he thinks it’s critical for students to start young just to get experience and a foot in the door.

“They will never be looking for a job if they are willing to work

hard and have the skills,” he said.

Nickens added that having the right skills is something these teams have gained through the rigorous curriculum they experience in the classroom, something they need to succeed in the competition.

“It was another excellent competition, and the students proved themselves quite capable as usual,” he said. “The bugs installed in the vehicles for this year’s competition were some of the most difficult to diagnose and repair that I have ever seen. I always enjoy working and supporting this competition. There is no other quite like it.”

Parker said all the partners, volunteers and sponsors involved in the student skills competition have one goal in mind; to make it the best experience possible for the competitors.

*In addition to the normal tools used to repair the cars, students now utilize laptop computers as another valuable tool.*

“They are so excited to represent their schools and to have the chance to move on to Nationals, but even if they don’t, they are all winners and we all support that,” she said. “This is the Superbowl for them.”

### The competition

To reach the state competition, junior and senior auto-tech students first had to qualify by taking an online exam. College students that attend a school where auto tech programs are taught are also eligible. The top 10 teams with the highest written scores moved on to participate at the Kentucky Speedway event.

In the hands-on portion of the competition, each team demonstrated their skills by repairing uniformly “bugged” new Ford Fiestas. The object of the competition is to repair all or as many bugs as possible in the shortest amount of time.

The bugs were planted by Ford technicians, automotive technology instructors from KCTCS and their students.

Chris Karr, the Ford service training instructor for the Cincinnati region, which includes Kentucky, said it is a tough competition and all those that qualified should be proud just to be involved.

“Ford always enjoys being a part of this. We look at these students as the future of automotive repair and hopefully within the Ford Motor dealership network,” he said. “It’s always good to have great new technicians coming in and that’s why we support this.”

Karr added that there is always a demand for these technicians as automobiles become more complicated.

“We need highly trained, intelligent people to repair the vehicles. It takes a lot of dedication and training and a lot of experience which will come to these students,” he said. “They’ve gotten a great start already and we look forward to seeing them in the future.”

Karr also said the secondary system of auto-tech programs is a great springboard into an industry where the technicians will always continue to learn to keep up with the changes that come with every new model year of vehicles.

This year’s competition is the 65th Ford/AAA Student Auto Skills competition, according to information from AAA. It also marks the 30th year in which AAA has been a sponsor and the 20th year of Ford sponsorship. About 13,000 students participated, nationally, in an effort to represent their school in this year’s competitions.

### The winners

As everyone connected to the competition noted, all teams that make it to this level are winners. The team from Butler County



*In the hands-on portion of the competition, each team demonstrated their skills by repairing uniformly “bugged” new Ford Fiestas.*

Area Technology Center, however, came out on top earning the honor of representing Kentucky at the nation event.

Randal Collins, the automotive technology instructor at the school said while the school is in a small community, many of the students there like the auto-tech program.

“To be able to bring this team here and take the win, I can honestly say it is the pinnacle of my career,” he said. “Even if we had taken 10th place, I would have been proud. To be able to go to Dearborn, Mich., and represent the state of Kentucky, which I dearly love, there is nothing better.”

Collins said it’s important for these students to bring a good work ethic and study a lot in order to win such a competition.

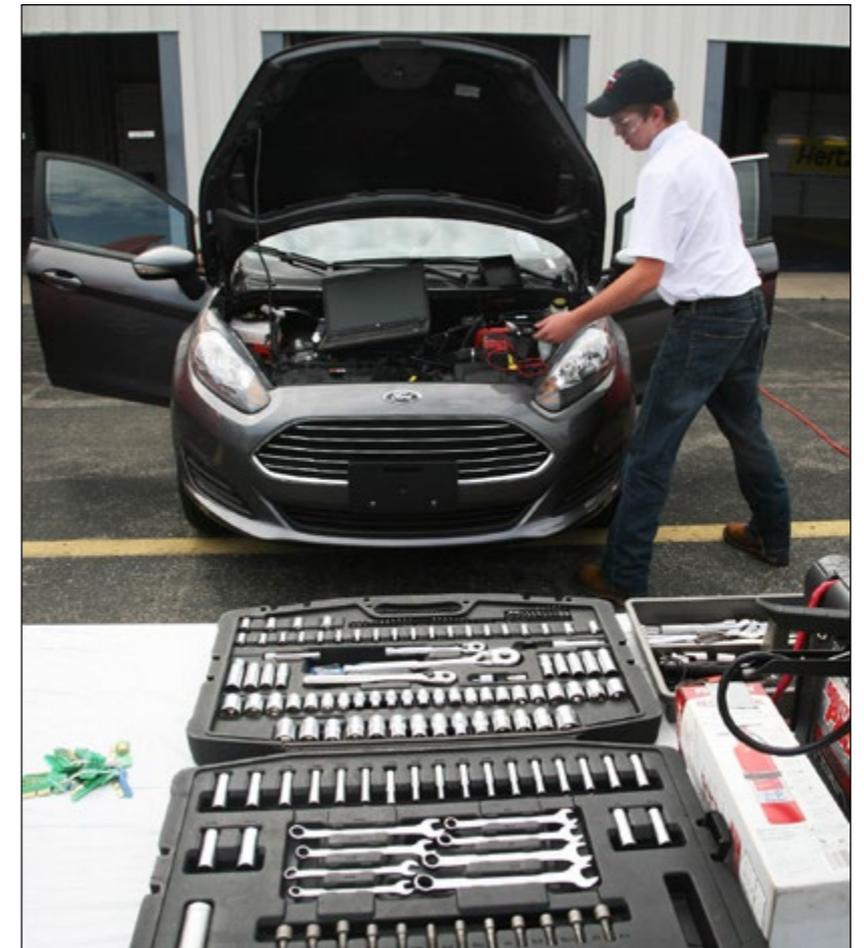
“I think, the way we did it was to divide and conquer. One student was working to get the car started while the other worked on other problems,” he said. “I think that is what got us across the finish line first.”

Butler County’s team members Matt Richmond and Logan Belcher are both planning to enter postsecondary institutions to further their studies in an automotive technician training program, but first there is the matter of competing at the national level next.

“Practice really does make perfect. All the hard work, staying after school and studying paid off,” said Belcher. “Winning the Ford AAA state competition means very much to me. Now the pressure is on. I’m not only representing Butler County but the entire state of Kentucky.”

Belcher added that one big benefit in participating in the competition was having Collins as a teacher.

“One advantage of being in the Automotive Technology class at



*Students competitors came prepared with complete sets of tools to make the corrections on their competition cars.*

BCATC is getting the great privilege of working with one of the best auto tech teachers I know, Randall Collins," he said. "When we first came up with the team we thought we would just have to practice a couple times before the competition and call it good enough. We as students felt as though we didn't need practice and that it would be easy. But when Mr. Collins explained to us what we were responsible in doing, it changed our outlook on the whole thing."

The two Kentucky students will join students from the other 49 states vying for millions in scholarship money, automotive equipment and a chance to visit the Wood Brothers Racing facility to work on race cars with the top technicians in the business.

*This year's Ford/AAA Auto Skills Competition winners posed with the winning trophy after the contest. The winning teams are from Butler County, Warren County, Shelby County and Wayne County.*

### Participating Teams

- Butler County Area Technology Center- First Place
- Warren County Area Technology Center- Second Place
- Shelby County Area Technology Center- Third Place
- Wayne County Area Technology Center- High Written Score
- Rockcastle County Area Technology Center
- Campbell County Area Technology Center
- Henderson County Career and Technical Center
- Lake Cumberland Area Technology Center
- Meade County Area Technology Center
- Grant County Career and Technical Center



# FFA Members Devote Time, Effort and Energy to Help Others



Members of the Webster County FFA chapter participated in the Day of Service by helping out on a horse farm in Bourbon County.

As more than 2,000 state FFA members made their way to the recent annual Kentucky FFA Convention last week, hundreds came a little early to participate in community service activities across the area.

The Day of Service is something that has become synonymous with FFA and the organization's dedication to helping communities at both state and national conventions.

This year, members participated in an array of activities in a variety of settings throughout Fayette and surrounding counties.

Webster County advisors Jarrod Hankins and Margo Bruce brought their students to nearby Paris, Kentucky to help at a horse farm.

It's no coincidence the farm is called Hankins Tennessee Walking Horses since it is owned by Hankin's father.

But for many farms, a helping hand from FFA members is welcomed not only to do chores but to allow those students to see different types of farming operations.

"When the Day of Service began, we wanted to participate and I felt like there were businesses that were more than willing to cooperate in the event but maybe not have as big a need," said Hankins. "When I was younger, I would come up and visit my dad during the summer and work on the farm so it was one of the first things I thought of for a community service project. I checked with the state FFA folks to see if we could count this and now we've been coming to spend the day on the horse farm for the past few years."

Hankins added that he thought it would be a little more educational for the students to see the horses and ride them, if they wanted, while also experiencing this area of agriculture first hand and helping someone he knows who needs the help.

Bruce said an experience like this becomes even more special as more and more students involved in FFA come from a non-farming background.

"What we are seeing now is even a smaller population of students from the farm," she said. "But they make real connections when they see the vastness of agriculture. It's not just about farming and they see that even more by being here."

Hankins said for those in agriculture, they know of its diversity, but for students coming to a bigger city like Lexington, it allows them to see agri-businesses like the Kentucky Proud Store, which is located at the site of the convention, then, 15 minutes away, they see a horse farm in the country where they get a hands-on experience in horse production.

"What I always tell the freshmen is, it's not all about farming anymore but farming will always be the hub and everything else spawns from that," he said. "All the businesses, all the transportation, the sales and marketing industry, all that comes from the hub which is the production segment. We always try to make sure the students understand that."

Ben Hornback, a recent graduate of Webster County High School and Elizabeth Waller, a sophomore student, made the trip to this year's convention and helped out at the horse farm. For Waller, it was her first trip to the event and for Hornback, his last as a high school student.

Hornback said as he prepares to go to Murray State University

in the fall, the community service hours looked good on college applications.

"I can gladly say that FFA has helped in getting scholarships and being accepted to college," he said. "Giving back to the community is something really good and a great aspect of my life and it's something FFA is all about."

Waller said she has participated in community service projects through her church so participating in the Day of Service was not something new for her.

"I think it's great to be involved in an organization that can help you out with community service hours for college," she said. "Watching the senior officers graduate this year and having them tell me all their memories and the fun they've had on these projects, I can see that it's going to have a great impact on my life and it's something I will carry with me after high school."

In a completely different setting, students from the Lawrence County FFA chapter made their way to the Aviation Museum of Kentucky located at Lexington's Bluegrass Airport to help with landscaping.



Two Webster County FFA members worked to repair a fence near the entrance to the horse farm.

Melissa Branham, the chapter advisor said her group participates in community service projects in their home area with goals at the local chapter, regional, state and national levels.

"Once the students do this, it leads them to be better citizens," she said. "We try to keep the students busy all summer and give them something to do."

Branham added that her students, being involved in FFA are learning so much more than just agriculture education; they're learning community service, leadership and skills needed to move forward past high school.

Lawrence County's outgoing FFA chapter president Brandy Blackburn said she was attending her fourth convention and the second year of participating in the Day of Service.

"I really like to help the community whether at home or here," she said. "I think this helps us to get and involved and interact with everyone."

Blackburn, who also served as a regional officer, added that being involved with FFA has given her many skills including being a better communicator and helping her grow as a leader.

"I want to be able to help others rather than just be worried about myself," she said.

Maelyn Huff is the current president of the Lawrence County chapter. Being a horse owner, she thought ag classes and FFA would be something good in which to get involved.

"I think this is a good experience for all us. This is the first time for our new officer team to be together and this was a good opportunity for us to bond," she said.

Alexandria Adams is a recent graduate of Lawrence County High School and was attending her third state convention. She said for the past two years, the chapter has participated in a lot of community service projects.

"We've always done something. We have an FFA garden each



A member of the Lawrence County FFA chapter helped with landscaping duties at the Aviation Museum of Kentucky.

year giving some of the produce to the community and selling some for (the chapter)," she said.

Adams added that the group always has a good time at the convention and works hard.

David Riggins, the executive director of the Aviation Museum said the museum depends almost entirely on volunteer help and when the call came asking if he could use some help from FFA members, he was more than glad to accept.

"They worked admirably here today and students who are interested in being in programs that provide community service, that tells me a lot about them," he said. "They are interested in helping, they are interested in learning and that's what we are all about here, helping kids learn not only about aviation but helping in the community."

The museum holds summer aviation camps for students every year in addition to the ones that come through the museum during the school year.

"I've always heard of FFA and know the students involved are interested in their communities and learning everything they can so I wouldn't be surprised to see some of them back again," he said.



Maelyn Huff, president of the Lawrence County FFA chapter, shoveled mulch at the Aviation Museum. In the background is a Marine jet that belongs to the museum.



*Ben Dunavan, a recent graduate of the Franklin County CTC, is one of the many welding scholarship recipients that is attending the Tulsa Welding School thanks to scholarship money earned from that school.*

# Top Welding School Taking Note of Kentucky Secondary Welding Students

As students across the state leave their high school careers behind and prepare for the next step educationally, several of them will be making their way to Florida to attend one of the most prestigious welding schools in the country.

The Tulsa Welding School (TWS) has become synonymous with preparing the best welding students in the country for careers that span every welding discipline.

And many of those students are coming from Kentucky; so much so, the school has taken a keen interest in the Kentucky secondary welding program providing scholarship money through a series of welding tournaments held annually.

This year dozens of students gained scholarship money with some getting the full tuition amount.

Garrett Milby, the TWS representative for the state, said he is always impressed with students from Kentucky because he knows how well they have been taught.

“The welding programs are very strong and have great educators who are teaching welding and informing the students of opportunities after high school and through postsecondary education,” he said. “The students are very hands-on, responsible, reliable and accountable. Most importantly, they do not mind to do the dirty jobs required of the welding trades. We are lucky to have so many welding programs throughout the state.”



Garrett Milby, the TWS representative for Kentucky, holds up a scholarship certificate during a welding competition. Each student participating received a \$500 scholarship from the school.



As older workers in the welding industry look toward retirement, the need for qualified welders to take their place is growing across the country.



Those programs are continuing to increase the number of students taking advantage of the scholarship opportunities made available through TWS.

"On average we have had about 30 to 40 students attend Tulsa's Jacksonville Campus on a yearly basis. Last year there were 43 students who started school and approximately 97 percent of those graduated," said Milby. "This year we should have about 60 to 70 students attend school, based on the number of students scheduled who started as of June. Several of those students will be attending school with full tuition, half tuition and quarter tuition scholarships thanks to the numerous welding competitions held around the state and the SkillsUSA, Kentucky state competition."

Milby added that beginning welding studies at the high school level is beneficial to the students for a number of reasons, including the fact that many postsecondary technical education students can use transfer credits into college. This allows them to save money on tuition, expedite their education, and get them into the career field quicker, he said.

"It allows students to get a basic understanding of welding so they can further pursue different avenues that the welding career offers such as structural welding, pipe welding, aluminum, stainless steel, to name a few; and it allows those students who are looking to go directly into the workforce to learn a skill and become gainfully employed," he said.

High school welding programs are getting a lot of attention and more and more Kentucky students are being recognized with scholarships to postsecondary institutions like the Tulsa Welding School.

Tyler Devine, a graduating student from Marshall County, and soon-to-be TWS student, is a testimony to a student looking to save on tuition money.

"I have been welding for four years at Marshall County High School and I heard about this scholarship through Garret Milby," he said. "This would save me from having to get a bank loan and being in debt."

Devine added that he would love to travel around and see different places, something Milby said is a real possibility for welding students once they have completed their education.

"The opportunities are numerous. Students have the opportunity to travel worldwide if they are willing," he said. "Additionally, students have the opportunity to come back and secure jobs close to their hometowns."

Of these job opportunities, many of them are well paying. Milby said based upon recent graduates who attended Tulsa Welding School from Kentucky, many have informed him they are averaging between \$15-22 per hour to start.

"Some students have expressed, with overtime included, they are making \$2,000-\$2,500 per week after taxes," he said. "A lot of the income potential really depends on the location of the job and if students are in traveling position status."

Milby added that not all welding positions pay those kinds of dollar figures but the opportunities to do well in the job market exist.

That job market is on the increase as more and more current welders reach retirement age and more and more industries are looking for employees with welding experience.

Quoting a major news outlet report, Milby said among the U.S. employers surveyed, 40 percent report difficulty filling positions.

"For the fifth consecutive year, skilled trades' positions are the most difficult jobs to fill," he said. "Projections say we will need over 200,000 welders, including all welding jobs, and that number grows even larger, 500,000 to 750,000, projecting out 10-15 years. The workforce is aging quickly; we are losing our workforce and have no one trained to replace those workers."

Jim Lamirande, a welding instructor at Southside Career and Technical Center, fully recognizes the need industry has and sees the need for students to learn from a hands-on perspective.

"This is very much a hands-on lab and a big project lab. We do a lot for Fayette County schools, local industry and the general public, as well," he said. "This program helps students get a hands-on, mechanical aptitude to be successful."

Blake Cheshire, a graduating senior in the Southside welding program and another recipient of a TWS scholarship, is just one of seven welding students at that school who are TWS bound. He said because his grandfather was a welder, he became interested at a young age but really got into it when he started high school.

"I went to three different competitions this year where I met a lot of other welding students and saw how different welding programs were run," he said. "This gave me a lot of experience and made me ready for the big competition at TWS in Jacksonville, Florida."



*Welding students are gaining the opportunity to make a good starting salary if they take advantage of scholarship opportunities offered by schools like TWS and get their industry certificates.*

Many Kentucky students make their way to that particular completion, one of the most prestigious for secondary students, in the country, and an annual event for TWS.

Cheshire pointed out that because of the level of education he received while at Southside, he will be able to test out of the first two phases offered at TWS and create the opportunity to gain his industry certification in about five months. Many other Kentucky welding students are able to do the same because of their experience in the state programs.

Such a certification will make Cheshire and students like him very attractive to industry. He thinks he will look to the pipeline industry, which is among the highest paying of welding jobs or work for a company that builds Navy ships.

Randy Shewmaker, the welding instructor at the Franklin County Career and Technical Center (CTC) has a long history of getting his students to the next level. This year was no different as several of his graduating welders will be attending TWS.

But he said his connection with those students doesn't end



*High school welding students are learning critical skills in their program areas that are making them attractive to postsecondary institutions, as well as and business and industry.*

upon their entrance into a school like TWS but rather when he sees them get the skills they need to find a place in the workforce where they can be successful.

"My job with these students is not finished when they graduate and never has been," he said. "A lot of what I do in the classroom has nothing to do with welding but it's about how to present them, to get that job and motivation to work. At the end of the day, it's about getting the student to believe in their self, showing them they can do this and then watching them perform to the highest level they want."

Ben Dunavan is one of Shewmaker's students heading to TWS. He said after touring the CTC as an eighth grader he knew he wanted to take classes there.

"I just honestly wanted to do something different and after coming to the welding program my freshman year, it has been a passion of mine," he said. "This opened my eyes to all the careers available through welding. I'm glad I have found a field I want to stick with."

Dunavan amassed scholarship money to TWS through welding competitions held throughout the school year; enough to pay three-quarters of his tuition fee.

Participating students can actually gain full scholarships for first place finishes but all that attend the various competitions get a \$500 scholarship just for participating.

In addition to the scholarship opportunities, some Kentucky programs have articulation agreements with TWS allowing many students to test out of a portion of their training because of the skills they have learned in their secondary programs.

these students and that the programs here are highly regarded by such institutions as TWS because of the highly skilled teachers that set these students on the path to those successful careers.

"Our teachers really have a passion for teaching a new generation the proper skills to move forward in this field after they graduate from high school," he said. "TWS has recognized this and has become a valuable partner in our efforts to make sure all of our students are college and career ready."

Miller added that it is critical to the industry that secondary programs remain strong and viable in order to meet the ever increasing demand for qualified welders.

"As successful as we have been in Kentucky, I would love to see our secondary programs expand both from a program standpoint and from an extended, in-class perspective," he said. "The longer our teachers have to teach these students, the more successful they will become."

In addition to creating opportunities for students, Milby thinks with such strong welding programs, when industries that utilize welders look for new locations, Kentucky should be high on their lists.

"It is my opinion that Kentucky would be a great place for any company looking to relocate or build. We have the workforce to meet the demands of new businesses looking to relocate especially in welding," he said. "Additionally, many students would enjoy the opportunity to come back home and reestablish themselves within their hometown and communities. If companies would relocate within the state, I believe we could supply plenty of qualified welders to meet the job requirements and fulfill the employer's needs.

What that means for Dunavan is, in about five months he could graduate with his Master Welders Certification.

Terry Miller is the academic consultant with the Office of Career and Technical Education, who oversees the secondary welding programs in Kentucky. He said getting that type of certification is a good start on a lucrative career for

# TRACK's First Year Deemed Successful as Plans to Expand Move Forward



*Chase Coffey, a machine tool technology student is one of the first-year TRACK participants. Murakami Manufacturing, U.S.A. Inc. has recently hired him as part of the company's apprenticeship program. As part of his training, Coffey continues his studies at the Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, Springfield campus.*

The Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK) program finished its pilot year with all of the student participants moving into fulltime apprenticeships with their industry partners.

Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) Business and Industry Specialist Mary Taylor created the program and said while numbers are small, a 100 percent success rate is indicative of the potential that exists within the program.

"As with any new program, the first year is a learning process as it was for TRACK. But to have all of our students who enrolled in the program advance into the fulltime apprenticeships is a sign of things to come as we expand for the coming school year," Taylor said.

Advanced manufacturing was the only program area in which students participated during the pilot phase. The 2014-15 year will include the construction trades as well, and plans to expand beyond that are in the works, according to Taylor.

"I think the success of TRACK in its first year speaks well to a couple of points; one being the quality of instruction students are receiving in their secondary programs and the other is the quality of the students themselves," said Taylor. "Employers are looking for employees with good people skills in addition to their workplace abilities and these students have shown they possess both."

Chase Coffey is one of the first-year TRACK students who enrolled in the machine tool technology program at Green County Area Technology Center (ATC) and entered the pre-apprenticeship program working at Murakami Manufacturing, U.S.A. Inc.

Having learned the necessary skills at the high school level made him an ideal candidate to enter the pre-apprenticeship program. Upon completion of his senior year, and after participating in TRACK, Coffey will continue his work at Murakami as an employee in their apprenticeship program.

"My guidance counselor recommended the machine tool program to me and I have loved it" he said. "I think beginning this career at the high school level opened up more opportunities for me."

Coffey said that having also taken welding courses in high school helped in his TRACK experience. After working through the summer, his next step will be to further his education at the Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, Springfield campus.

Angie Miller, the plant administration manager at Murakami said there are a lot of opportunities at the company especially for young adults from the ATC.

"Hopefully we can take these students to the next level," she said. "From what I have seen of the TRACK program so far, catching these young people at this level who have a skill in mind gets it engrained in them so they can keep moving forward."

Miller added that she would like to continue with TRACK and looks forward to bringing more students on board with the company. She pointed out that there are a lot of people with degrees coming into the workforce but not so many with the needed skills. Those that do have those skills can make a good salary and have a good career ahead of them, she said.

Barry Porter was Coffey's machine tool technology teacher at the Green County ATC. He said with the help of companies like Murakami, he is starting to see manufacturing jobs make a come-



*Pictured from left: Barry Porter, machine tool technology teacher at Green County ATC, Chase Coffey and Angie Miller, plant administration manager at Murakami.*

back in the state.

“This is sparking an interest with the students and they can actually see it’s something they can accomplish and can make a good living through the machine tool program,” he said.

Porter added that many of his students take other classes at the ATC which gives them an edge in the workforce, having multiple skills. He also said that teaching employability skills within those ATC programs has also made a difference for the students.

“With the TRACK program, we are already looking at students for next year and we want to send the best,” he said. “We already have students wanting to know how they can get into this program.”

Dr. Linda Floyd, Green County ATC principal said after participating in the TRACK program for the first year, she sees opportunities for it to grow.

“We’re already talking about TRACK with the business programs because we have other teachers interested in being a part of it,” she said. “We wanted to make sure we were going to be successful with it in our first year and fortunately we had a good partner to work with in Murakami. It was a team approach.”

Floyd added that having business and industry partners at the secondary level is critical to the existence of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and it provides the chance to show the caliber of students coming from the secondary level.

While a student at Henderson County High School (HCHS), Cody Burke enrolled in that school’s Career and Technical Education Center’s machine tool technology program. Stuart Jones, machine tool technology teacher at Henderson County, thought Burke would be a good choice to participate in the TRACK pre-apprenticeship program because of his quality machine tool skills and his good work ethic.

“The kind of work ethic he has is sometimes rare these days and Cody is one of those students who gets things done in an appropriate time frame and always wants something to do; that’s

a good combination,” he said.

Burke began participating with the school’s TRACK industry partner, Gibbs Die-Casting. Now, after a successful year and graduation, he will continue as an employee with the company in its apprenticeship program.

As part of his continued apprenticeship, Burke will have the opportunity to attend college this fall; something he is looking forward to.

“I wasn’t sure I was going to get there but this program gets my foot in the door with pay and benefits while going to college, and no student loan debt,” he said.

Victor Doty is the Henderson County CTE director and a product of an apprenticeship himself. He said in addition to working the TRACK program, they have worked with local business and industry to try and get past some of the barriers of working with high school students such as age.

“The barriers are the businesses that are setting policy that you don’t hire a 17 year old but they are overcoming that down here,” he said.

In fact, the entire state is now covered by an agreement between the Kentucky Department of Education and global human resource agency Adecco.

That company has paved the way for Kentucky high school students to gain valuable work experience through cooperative education opportunities and pre-apprenticeship programs.

The Kentucky Youth Employment Solution (YES) agreement will allow students to be more involved in their co-op experience while alleviating some major legal issues for business and industry partners that have hindered co-op programs in the past.

The agreement covers any co-op student anywhere in the state, something that will allow schools like HCHS to move for-

ward on TRACK and other co-op programs.

Doty added that the difference he sees in apprenticeships now verses those from several years ago is that course offerings match up with business and industry needs, something that will, over time, help keep students and those businesses close to home.

“The whole idea is to help hold these students in their own communities and I think this is going to be a win-win situation,” he said. “It may take five years to see the fruits of it but we’ve seen a little bit of that already with these young people coming out of here and going into apprenticeships.”

Doty emphasized that the mindset is already changing. Guidance counselors are now seeing this as the other four-year option for students and part of the change of the accountability system now in place in Kentucky.

“This is a whole package and I think it’s going to have a great impact and I think it will be for the nation and not just Kentucky. People from other states are already contacting us about these programs,” he said. “I could retire any day now but these types of things are making it more exciting and making it easier for me to stay a little longer to see these things through.”

Brian Baily is the assistant principal at HCHS and head of the school’s CTE unit. He said in the past there has been a set of courses a student would progress through in a chosen career pathway but TRACK has allow more flexibility in adapting to changes needed by employers.

“One of the things we have been looking at is how to use our existing resources to meet those needs and meet our students’ needs,” he said. “The fact that the TRACK program culminates in a certificate that’s recognized for college- and career-readiness, will go a long way in raising those percentages but I think the work-based learning component is also going to broaden the student’s



*Meetings like this one in Northern Kentucky were held across the state prior to the implementation of the TRACK program. Laura Arnold, KDE Director Division of Technical Schools and Federal Programs is pictured speaking to local educators, business leaders and government officials about the program.*



As part of his classroom experience, student Cody Burke had a chance to learn the operations of different machines used in the manufacturing facilities.

recognition of the fact that employers expect people to achieve at a certain level and think critically."

Baily pointed out that the support from the district and the local community for the CTE programs within the school has been great through the years and remains strong.

These positive relationships are part of the foundation of TRACK, said Taylor.

"It really takes a buy-in from the local workforce community to make this work. We see success not only with the TRACK program but all things connected to CTE," she said.

Tom Thompson, principal at Breckinridge County ATC has also seen that type of support. The school's machine tool technology program has been recognized for years as one of the top industrial-related programs in the state; so much so that their programs were already in line with local business and industry needs.

"We were already doing most of what needed to be done to implement the program," he said. "The program is designed to let the employer choose the core classes they want their future apprentices to take but all of our partner businesses asked that we simply use the courses that our students had been taking, thus allowing us



Stuart Jones, right, machine tool technology teacher at Henderson County explains a concept to student Cody Burke. Jones said students have the opportunity to gain valuable experience at the high school level for many of the advanced manufacturing jobs that are becoming available both locally and across the country.

to make few changes to our curriculum."

In beginning this type of hands-on education at the secondary level is extremely important to get apprenticeships started as a motivational tool for those interested in their chosen field, Thompson said.

"Students earning the opportunity to enter our pre-apprenticeship program see the value of the school work as it ties directly to what they are doing on the job," he said. "Employers have a chance to help directly influence the instruction relating to real world application. This is a powerful tool in the process of creating an environment and culture focused on learning with purpose."

Thompson had five students involved in the TRACK program this year; more than any of the other pilot schools.

"The students have reacted very positively to the program. They have been excited to know that what they are doing before graduation will count toward their apprenticeship goals after school," he said. "This fact seems to be a motivational tool for the employer and our teachers."

Breckinridge County ATC's business partner Whitworth Tool,

Inc. has been a longtime supporter of the school and has hired many former students in the past.

Thompson said the fit between the two through the TRACK program has been very good with benefits for both the employer and the students.

"The pre-apprenticeship gives the employer the opportunity to see our students in action as well as help mold them into the employee that they need all the while giving the students training hours toward their apprenticeship," he said. "We would love to expand our pre-apprenticeship program to other areas of manufacturing to include welding as well as increase the number of employers involved in the current program."

In addition to their current business partner, Thompson added that there are three other companies that have agreed to participate for the coming year. He also pointed out that the program would not have been as successful if it were not for the hard work of Taylor and Mike Donta, deputy commissioner with the Labor Cabinet. They have been the driving force and marketing agents of this program and they deserve the recognition, he said.