



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

No. 13-014

February 12, 2013

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FORMER CAREER AND TECH STUDENT IN NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – A former career and technical education student and Kentucky high school graduate will be in the national spotlight tonight when President Barack Obama delivers his State of the Union address.

Breckinridge County native Brad Henning, 23, will be First Lady Michelle Obama's guest in the gallery at the Capitol when the president delivers his speech to Congress at 9 p.m. ET tonight.

The President is expected to emphasize the importance of training workers with skills that lead directly to good jobs in industries that need workers, including advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and information technology; in his speech the President will likely recognize Brad for pursuing a career in manufacturing and becoming a journeyman machinist.

Brad's career started when he was a high school student at Breckinridge Co. High School where his high school teacher got him interested in taking a machining class at the Breckinridge Area Technology Center. He tried it and liked it and ended up taking machine tool technology classes from both Tom Thompson and Dean Monarch at the school. Senior year, Brad worked as a co-op student with Atlas Machine and Supply, Inc. of Louisville and before graduation had a full time job offer to enter its apprenticeship program.

"We're very proud of Brad and what he has been able to accomplish," said Tom Thompson, his former teacher and now principal at the Breckinridge Area Technology Center. "But Brad is not alone. We see students in the career and technical education program here and across Kentucky learn and apply advanced academic concepts and then go on to successful careers in business and industry -- in some cases earning as much or more as their college counterparts."

(more)

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Since graduating from high school, Brad’s employer, Atlas Machine and Supply, Inc. has paid for him to complete the 576 hours education required for his journeyman machinist certification. He has also completed 8,000 hours in on-the-job training.

“This is the perfect example of what can happen when a student graduates career-ready with 21st-century skills,” said Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday. “When he graduated high school, this young man had the core academic skills, the employability skills and technical skills to get a job, pursue postsecondary training and start on a lifelong career.”

Career and technical education is a key component in the state’s push for all students to be college or career-ready – or both by the time they complete high school. Kentucky’s college/career-readiness rate among high school graduates jumped last year from 38 percent to 47 percent, in part due to growth in the number of students who qualified as career-ready under the Unbridled Learning accountability system.

“We are seeing more students take career and technical education courses in a variety of program areas and in the process get excited about learning,” Holliday said. “We want students and parents to know that the career pathway is a viable option for our young people and will help secure the future of our state by ensuring a skilled workforce able to fill the demand for jobs.”

Brad’s invitation from the White House came after a national media story about his experience with career and tech education, the apprenticeship and his entry into manufacturing as a lifelong career.

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Photo of Brad Henning Credit: Atlas Machine/John Fitzgerald

KY Career and Technical Education Facts

- During 2010-11 there were 153,727 secondary students enrolled in at least one CTE course
- CTE is provided in 163 out of 174 Districts in 323 Middle Schools, High Schools, Area Technology Centers, and Career and Technical Centers
- 75 percent of high school students enroll in CTE programs

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