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## FloridaMakes Works with Industry to Sponsor the First Statewide Online Manufacturing Apprenticeship Program

**Orlando, FLA.** — FloridaMakes is sponsoring a statewide registered apprenticeship program — the FloridaMakes Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship. The first program offered will focus on entry-level skills for new and existing employees in the Industrial Manufacturing Technician (IMT) occupation. With online, on-demand access to the foundational Manufacturing Skills Standards Council's (MSSC) Certified Production Technician training curriculum, this new approach brings Florida's manufacturers a hybrid training model that addresses entry-level skills gaps and provides foundational manufacturing knowledge regardless of the specific occupation, which will help give apprentices the tools they need to move on to more specific occupations. It also bypasses the need for employees attending courses at institutions and provides flexible access for students with lifestyles, work schedules, and geographical barriers that often prohibit participation in traditional "in-class" offerings.

"The future of the Florida economy depends on expanded access to meaningful workforce education opportunities," said Henry Mack, Chancellor for Career and Adult Education at the Florida Department of Education. "If we are to become No. 1 in workforce education by 2030, we must double-down on apprenticeships, especially those as innovative and market-driven as this one."

"FloridaMakes is here to serve and assist our manufacturers with talent development challenges," said Tina Berger, Director of Talent Development at FloridaMakes. "For years manufacturers have voiced a need to revamp the tried and true earn-and-learn apprenticeship programs, calling for competency-based versus time-based learning models. The IMT Apprenticeship Program addresses this request as a gamechanger for small and medium-sized companies and, in particular, for those with facilities in rural communities without access to traditional vocational training centers."

The program was designed through a sector strategy approach led by multiple employers within the industry, represented within the Florida Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Leadership Council (AMWLC), in collaboration with FloridaMakes, CareerSource Florida, the Florida Department of Education's Division of Career and Adult Education, and the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC).

“CareerSource Florida is proud to support the new Industrial Manufacturing Technician apprenticeship program to address ongoing talent needs in one of Florida’s key industry sectors,” said CareerSource Florida President and CEO Michelle Dennard. “The use of online training curricula is a vital component in addressing immediate concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the long-term, critical need to ensure Floridians have access to apprenticeship opportunities in high-demand fields. We are pleased to participate with our partners in expediting this much-needed program.”

The IMT Apprenticeship Program is a career pathway to higher-skilled positions for entry-level workers and especially for women and underrepresented populations for whom traditional “classroom” training programs may pose attendance difficulties due to lack of transportation and inflexible time constraints.

“This new Industrial Manufacturing Technician apprenticeship is a great step forward for manufacturers and for employees or potential employees in the manufacturing field,” said Roy Sweatman, CEO of Southern Manufacturing Technologies and Chair of the Florida Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Leadership Council. “It is short enough to feel attainable and flexible enough to be used in almost any manufacturing business. It is a great stepping-stone to bigger and better things for the future of Florida’s workforce.”

Program policies are being formalized with an expected launch to accept applications in late May 2020. For more information about the IMT Apprenticeship Program, please contact Tina Berger, Director of Talent Development at FloridaMakes by email at [tina.berger@floridamakes.com](mailto:tina.berger@floridamakes.com) or by phone at 407.450.7206.

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### About FloridaMakes

FloridaMakes is a statewide, industry-led, public-private partnership operated by an alliance of Florida's regional manufacturers associations with the sole mission of strengthening and advancing Florida's economy by improving the competitiveness, productivity and technological performance of its manufacturing sector, with an emphasis on small- and medium-sized firms. It accomplishes this by providing services focused on three principle value streams: technology adoption, talent development, and business growth. FloridaMakes is the official representative of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) National Network in the state of Florida, a program of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce. For more information about FloridaMakes, please visit [FloridaMakes.com](http://FloridaMakes.com) and follow [@FloridaMakes](https://www.instagram.com/FloridaMakes).

### About the Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Leadership Council

Florida's Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Leadership Council (AMWLC), through a sector strategy approach, serves to provide an essential business feedback loop to ensure Florida's training and workforce system has a deep understanding of, and is responsive to, the talent needs of the advanced manufacturing industry sector. The Council is comprised of manufacturing CEOs, plant managers and HR executives representing Florida's regional manufacturing association network, work together with other industry stakeholders to address statewide talent and workforce policy matters.

