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**VIRGINIA RANKS 6<sup>TH</sup> IN STATE TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE INDEX**  
*-Index Credits VCATS as Contributor to Virginia's Success-*

RICHMOND, VA – The Milken Institute, an independent economic policy think tank based in California, gave Virginia a 6<sup>th</sup> place overall ranking in their 2008 State Technology and Science Index. The Commonwealth achieved 2nd-place finishes in the components for percentage of high-tech establishment births and percentage of establishments in high-tech industries. In addition, having a number of high-tech government contractors, Virginia ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the Technology and Science Work Force Composite Index.

“States that have a vision and a plan for building and retaining high-wage jobs and viable industries are finding ways to invest in their science and technology assets,” said Ross DeVol, director of Regional Economics at the Milken Institute, and lead author of the study. “The changes in this year’s Index give a good measure of who is ahead in the increasing competition for scarce human capital and other resources needed for a successful industry.”

The State Technology and Science Index ranks states on 77 indicators that comprise five equally weighted major composites that create a picture of how well each state is performing in today’s highly competitive knowledge-based economy. The 2008 edition expands on the contributions of human capital formation and the

commercialization of intellectual property. The analysis started with examining research and development, as well as innovation capacities, all of which are considered the raw materials of technology-based economic development.

The Index gave credit to Virginia for seeking to bolster its future technical work force by enlisting the Virginia Biotechnology Association and the Virginia Manufacturers Association to lead a statewide effort known as the Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills (VCATS), to recruit, train, and certify skilled manufacturing technicians.

The certification will ensure manufacturers are hiring individuals with basic knowledge of the advanced technologies common in today's manufacturing environment. Sheryl Bryan, Director of VCATS, is inundated with concerns from companies about the ability of Virginia's work force to keep up with continually progressing technologies. "One of the reasons we created the VCATS training and certification program was to ensure a continual flow of qualified employees into the growing number of industries using advanced technologies. We want to keep Virginia at the top of the list for high-tech companies, investors and research funding."

VCATS was awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor in 2006. In October 2007 the State Science and Technology Institute (SSTI) awarded VCATS its highest award for exceptional achievement in technology-based work force development. VCATS was also awarded the Southern Growth Innovator Award in June 2007 by the Southern Growth Policies Board. For more information on the Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills, go to [www.vacats.org](http://www.vacats.org).

About the Virginia Biotechnology Association – [www.vabio.org](http://www.vabio.org)

The Virginia Biotechnology Association, founded in 1992, is the statewide non-profit organization that promotes the scientific and economic impact of the life sciences industry in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Nearly 160 biotechnology, pharmaceutical and medical device companies are based in Virginia, mainly clustered around universities in Blacksburg, Charlottesville, Richmond, Norfolk and Northern Virginia.

About the Virginia Manufacturers Association – [www.vamanufacturers.com](http://www.vamanufacturers.com)

The Virginia Manufacturers Association develops and advocates for constructive public policies, and supports a broad array of business services and programs to help ensure that Virginia manufacturing companies can be productive, profitable and competitive in Virginia. Virginia's 6,000 manufacturers employ over 288,000 individuals, contribute \$31 billion to the gross state product, and account for over 84% of the state's exports to the global economy.

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