



## Press Release

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### **VMA Creates Workforce Development Division *-Sheryl Bryan Appointed to Lead the Effort-***

**RICHMOND, VA** – The Virginia Manufacturers Association (VMA) is announcing the formation of a new division of the association. The workforce development division will focus talent development, employment services, skills certification, scholarships, community relations and research into a “one stop shop” for the advanced technology industry. The new division will be known as the Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills (VCATS). Sheryl Bryan will be the Executive Director of VCATS.

“I am looking forward to working with our partners throughout Virginia to develop the talent that will be critical in assisting the Commonwealth in maintaining, growing and attracting new businesses” stated Bryan. She began her new assignment on July 1, 2010.

The new workforce development division will centralize all the educational and job-related programs of the VMA. The new division will also serve as the VMA’s workforce development, secondary education and higher education policy arm - replacing the workplace affairs committee of the organization. Alice Scott, VMA Director of Members Services, will lead the policy development and marketing efforts of VCATS. Some of the services will include the Manufacturing Technician Certification, World-Class Manufacturing Certificate, VCATS Soft Skills Assessment, VMA Energy Auditor Certificate, 12 different skills-based modules for assessing essential skills gaps in production workers and coordination of the statewide *Dream It Do It Virginia* outreach initiative to promote careers in advanced technology industries.

The VCATS division will also establish several VCATS Assessment Centers across the Commonwealth and Mid-Atlantic as part of its new mission. These Centers will serve individuals interested in utilizing the VCATS tools to identify and/or develop the required skills for opportunities in key advanced technology industries. Depending upon the geographic location, some Virginians will have access to scholarships for VCATS assessments and training. More information will be available by mid-July.

The VCATS division will also continue its longstanding relationship with the Virginia Biotechnology Association (VaBIO). Initially, the relationship will focus on the expansion of [www.advancedtechnologyjobs.com](http://www.advancedtechnologyjobs.com), an online career center focused on connecting employers and job seekers across the Commonwealth. Mark Herzog, Executive Director of VaBIO, stated, “As the original co-founders of the VCATS program, we are gratified by the results of this collaboration with our private sector partners and our colleagues at the VMA. We are proud of this achievement and look forward to the next successful phase of VCATS.”

The mission of VCATS is to produce and oversee a competency-based modular certification and assessment system for science and technology-based firms, as well as provide exposure, education, and training for the system. To date, VCATS has:

- Developed a statewide manufacturing career path and certification system
- Assessed 616 individuals, certifying 146 Manufacturing Specialist and 101 Level 1 Manufacturing Technicians as a result
- Trained 12 individuals through VCATS Learning Labs in Richmond and Hampton
- Published validation reports authored by Dr. Jerry Klein and James Madison University
- Developed the statewide *Dream It Do It Virginia* outreach initiative with the help of area partners in Southwest and Shenandoah Valley
- Received Excellence in Technology-based Economic Development from the State Science and Technology Institute (SSTI)
- Received the Southern Growth Innovator Award
- Received Certificate of Appreciation for exceptional contributions at Micron Technology

Scott Denicourt, VMA Treasurer and Managing Director of Pfizer Consumer Healthcare in Richmond, commented on the transition, “Pfizer’s involvement with the development of the VCATS program from the ground up has been very rewarding. We are very impressed with the assessment and training tools that were developed with the support of industry leaders across the Commonwealth. We look forward to the future of VCATS as it continues to respond to the industry workforce needs in Virginia.”

For more information on VCATS services or how to get involved in workforce development or secondary education and higher education policy, please contact Sheryl Bryan or Alice Scott at [sbryan@vamanufacturers.com](mailto:sbryan@vamanufacturers.com), [ascott@vamanufacturers.com](mailto:ascott@vamanufacturers.com) or 804-643-7489.

### VCATS Background

The Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills (VCATS) started as a joint workforce development, training and certification program of the Virginia Biotechnology Association (VaBIO) and the Virginia Manufacturers Association (VMA) to establish solutions to the upcoming shortage of advanced manufacturing workers in Virginia. Founding investors included Alcoa Inc., Boehringer Ingelheim Chemicals, Merck & Co. Inc., Micron Technology Inc., Novozymes Biologicals, Pfizer Consumer Healthcare, Philip Morris USA, the VMA and VaBIO. Other private industry partners include DuPont-Spruance, National Fruit Product Company, Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding, Swedwood Danville LLC and Universal Leaf Tobacco Company Inc. For more information, go to [www.vacats.org](http://www.vacats.org).