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VMA and ECPI University Launch Statewide Manufacturing Technology Initiative

Program Designed to Close Skills Gap, Boost Economic Development

Richmond, Va. – The Virginia Manufacturers Association (VMA) is pleased to announce ECPI University as its exclusive academic partner to increase accessibility to advanced technology industry training and credentials. ECPI will serve as the premiere provider of the association's industry-endorsed manufacturing technology (MT) training to prepare individuals for employment in critical occupations and to pursue further academic credentials. Initial offerings will include the *Level 1 Manufacturing Technician* and *Manufacturing Specialist* programs. This partnership will elevate the level of technical expertise in the Commonwealth leading to greater employment opportunities in the growing manufacturing technology profession.

In 2010, VMA and ECPI partnered to establish certified assessment centers for the Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills' (VCATS) at all six Virginia campuses. With the opportunity to provide VCATS-endorsed Manufacturing Technology curriculum, ECPI is uniquely positioned to assist Virginia's workforce through targeted instruction designed to close skill gaps and provide key credentials sought by the world's leading manufacturers.

"ECPI University's commitment to offering programs aligned with employment and career advancement opportunities makes it an ideal partner in our efforts to build a 21st century workforce," said Katherine DeRosear, VMA's Director of Workforce Development. "Our industry research consistently shows there is a middle skills gap for qualified workers to meet our current and projected employment needs in Virginia. We are pleased ECPI has accepted this opportunity to lead the state, and ultimately the nation, in positioning education as an engine for industry retention and expansion."

"ECPI University is excited to be a part of this effort to help drive the development and training of industry-certified workers within Virginia", said ECPI Virginia Beach Campus President Kevin Paveglio. "The academic initiative is going to lead to a 'real-world' outcome that will improve expansion for manufacturing in Virginia. Providing education relevant to employment is what ECPI has been doing for 45+ years so this is a natural fit for us".

ECPI will adopt VMA's workforce development model which includes providing onsite customized MT training to employers in addition to courses offered at each campus. This blended approach is a proven strategy to retain the existing workforce while recruiting qualified individuals who are interested in advanced technology, engineering and mechatronics.

Based upon the Skilled Trades Gap Analysis commissioned by the VMA in 2007, industry leaders developed a vision for creating a skills pipeline by: establishing statewide competency-based and employer-validated standards for critical occupations; developing a competency-based training program designed by employers; creating an advanced technology career pathway; and, identifying an expert training and development institution to deliver industry-driven training and assessment. The VMA is pleased to announce that effective December 8, 2011, this goal has been achieved in partnership with ECPI University.

About ECPI University

[ECPI University](#) is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate, baccalaureate, and master degrees and diploma programs. With campuses in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, ECPI, a private university established in 1966, offers convenient classes during the day, evening, and online; graduate employment services are provided. Continuing education certification classes and testing are also available.

ECPI's fields of study include: TECHNOLOGY: Cyber and Network Security, Information Systems, Healthcare IT, Web Development, Simulation and Game Programming, Database Programming, Business Systems Administration, Accounting Administration, Electronics Engineering Technology, Mechatronics; BUSINESS AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE: Accounting, Business Administration, IT Management, Food Service Management, Criminal Justice, Homeland Security; HEALTH SCIENCES: Healthcare Administration, Health Information Management, Medical Administration, Physical Therapist Assistant, Massage Therapy, Dental Assisting, Medical Assisting, Medical Radiography, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Surgical Technology, Nursing (BSN), Registered Nursing, Practical Nursing; CULINARY: Culinary Arts. (Program field availability varies by campus.) For more information, visit www.ecpi.edu.

About Virginia Manufacturers Association (VMA)

The Virginia Manufacturers Association is the only statewide association exclusively dedicated to manufacturers and their network of service providers. The organization has been *Industry's Advocate*[™] since 1922 through successfully advocating for constructive public policies at all levels of government. The VMA also 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 5,000+ manufacturers employ over 230,000 individuals, contribute \$34 billion to the gross state product, and account for over 80% of the state's exports to the global economy. For more information about the VMA, please visit www.vamanufacturers.com.