



NEWS RELEASE

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Chattanooga Chamber and Chattanooga State Partner to Expand Apprenticeships in Community

By Betty A. Proctor, Chattanooga State

November 16, 2018 (Chattanooga, TN) --- In recognition of National Apprenticeship Week, the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce and Chattanooga State Community College announce a partnership to work together with business, industry and other educational partners to grow apprenticeship programs in our service area.

Chamber CEO and President Christy Gillenwater shared that according to the Department of Labor, for every dollar spent on apprenticeships, employers can expect to see approximately a \$1.50 return on investment. "The 'earn while you learn' apprenticeship model shows that 9 out of 10 apprentices are employed after completing their apprenticeship with an average salary of \$60K per year," stated ChattState President Dr. Rebecca Ashford. "Not only that, but workers who complete apprenticeship programs earn \$300K more over a career than peers who don't," she added.

Heid King, Hamilton County Schools Work-based Learning Coordinator at Gestamp, explained the success of the first registered high school-based apprenticeship program in the state, which is embedded at Gestamp.

Chattanooga State's Economic and Workforce Development Vice President Bo Drake stated that "there are more than 1,000 occupations that can be apprenticed, and we have every intention of expanding these programs into other high demand, high wage fields." Drake went on to say that the Industrial Maintenance program through the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) would be ChattState's "first College-Sponsored, Registered, Non-Union Apprenticeship Program" enrolling for fall 2019 (pending Department of Labor approval).

"Graduates from Industrial Maintenance are highly skilled in mechanical and electrical maintenance, motor and sensor control, and programmable controls to earn a FANUC robot industry certification," said Dr. Jim Barrott, Executive Vice President of Chattanooga State's TCAT. Dr. Barrott explained that program graduates can expect a starting salary of \$18 to \$25 an hour, the program boasts a 100 percent job placement rate, and graduates are highly sought after by companies in the region.

Molly Blankenship, Vice President of Talent Initiatives for the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce, closed out the program with a call to action to business and industry to work alongside the Chamber and Chattanooga State to grow apprenticeship programs in our community. Blankenship invited prospective students and companies to learn more at chattanoogastate.edu/apprenticeships.

For more information, contact Economic and Workforce Development Vice President Bo Drake at (423) 697-2606.