

Louisiana Skills USA Championships

Leading the way to new Workforce! (Baton Rouge, Louisiana) - Sponsors of Louisiana's showcase event for vocational students announced the dates of the state's largest occupational skill competition today. The Louisiana Skills USA Championships, formerly known as the Louisiana VICA Skill Olympics, will start on April 3, 2003. The new name highlights new initiatives in work force training.

The announcement of the annual event was

made at the annual SkillsUSA Joint Executive Council planning meeting, Friday January 10, 2003.

Louisiana has been holding statewide skill contest since April 1981.

This past year, Louisiana's SkillsUSA association sent 101 student contestants to the national competition and received 6 medallions.

The national competition was

started in 1967 as a way to recognize the talents and aspirations of America's vocational-technical students.

Both the national and Louisiana Skills USA Championships are

sponsored by SkillsUSA.

We found that we had outgrown the term 'Olympics,' here in Louisiana and at the national level. That name put too much emphasis on individuals winning, said Larry Rabalais Louisiana State SkillsUSA Director. "The real focus of the Louisiana Skills USA Championships is to bring the best out in everyone who participates. America's and Louisiana's economy is only as strong as it is broad-based. Many skills are required and everyone needs to contribute," he explained.



In the first year the, SkillsUSA is a nationwide competition was organization serving

comprised of only three vocational-technical students in contests. Since then, the event high schools, two-year colleges and has grown to include 72 and vocational-technical contests and more than 4,023 centers. SkillsUSA's annual contestants from across the membership averages more than one-quarter million Louisiana Skills USA students and teachers in trade, Championships will go to the industrial, technical and health national competition in Kansas City, Mo., in June 2003.

(Continued on page 2)

SkillsUSA is an applied method for preparing America's and Louisiana's high performance workers in public vocational-technical programs. It provides quality education experiences for students in leadership, teamwork, citizenship and character development. It emphasizes total quality at work: high ethical standards, superior work skills, lifelong education and pride in the dignity of work. SkillsUSA also promotes understanding of the free enterprise system and involvement in community service activities.

SkillsUSA officials give four reasons for the growth of the competition program. First, vocational students need a means by which they can be recognized for their achievements. Second, the competition is a collective effort by business, education and labor. Third, the contestants are stringently evaluated according to industry competencies. Fourth, the competition stresses all employment skills, including communications and teamwork.

The Skills USA Championships has become one of the best ways for us to focus on skilled workers and what they must do to be successful, said Larry Rabalais, Louisiana State SkillsUSA Director. "We think the new name keeps that focus where it belongs."

This year's Louisiana Skills USA Championships will be held April 3, 2003 beginning at 8:00 a.m. at Louisiana Technical College, Shreveport/Bossier Campus 1020 North Market Street, Shreveport, LA.

The Louisiana Skills USA Championships is a showcase for the state's best vocational students to demonstrate their excellence in both skill and leadership. Involving more than 600 contestants, the state event shows Louisiana who its skilled workers are-and what it takes for them to succeed. The championships are a positive way for employers to express their needs directly to educators. The competition is unique: technical experts from labor and industry design the contests to include a wide variety of skills that are needed in our work force, rather than

gearing the events to what is taught in particular training programs. This motivates both students and personnel. This direct evaluation improves and upgrades the state of occupational training throughout Louisiana.

The philosophy of the Louisiana Skills USA Championships is to reward students for excellence, to involve industry in directly evaluation student performance, and to keep training relevant to employers' needs. Nearly 150 judges and contest organizers from the ranks of labor and management make it possible. They not only design the contest—they provide equipment, tools, supplies, money, executive time, talent, technical expertise, and awards for the winners. The investment by Louisiana business and labor in time and management is significant.

Louisiana SkillsUSA works directly with business and industry to maintain American productivity, quality and competitiveness. **SkillsUSA and Business is a partnership that pays off.** Through a proven system that produces quality-trained, well-rounded,

(Continued on page 3)

entry-level employees, SkillsUSA brings together educators, administrators, corporate America, labor organizations, trade associations and government. The result is a coordinated effort that addresses America's need for a globally competitive, educated and skilled work force.

In addition, SkillsUSA teaches the importance of developing leadership skills, positive attitudes and pride in workmanship. SkillsUSA emphasizes respect for the dignity of work, high standards in trade ethics, superior workmanship, quality and safety.

Meeting Business Needs. Nearly 1,527 corporations, labor unions and trade associations support SkillsUSA programs at the national level. The active participation of business and industry is the key to SkillsUSA's success. SkillsUSA programs give students an edge. They also give affiliated companies an edge. Through involvement with Louisiana SkillsUSA, your business can:

Capitalize on its ability to access

SkillsUSA students-the best our educational system has to offer-as entry-level employees.

Improve the relevance of training in the educational system.

Use a proven system to access education and effect change.

Become involved in your trade area and receive publicity for your organization.

SkillsUSA provides corporate America with a direct link to one of its most important suppliers: *our educational system*. There is an even exchange of benefits in these partnerships as teachers provide relevant training and employers put well-prepared people to work.

In June 1999, at the National Skills USA Championships in Kansas City, Missouri, Louisiana had the distinction of its first National Officer. Mr. Jared Lord, Sowela Campus, was elected National Postsecondary Parliamentarian. Mr. Warren

Landry, formally of Delta-Ouachita Campus was named Region Two Advisor of the year at the closing session of the National Skills USA Championships.

Again in 2001 Louisiana cultivated another National Officer, Mr. Mark Peters of Terrebonne Vo-Tech High School who was elected National Region Two Vice-President. Mr. Larry Rabalais, Louisiana SkillsUSA director was named 2001-2002 National Director of the Year. Mr. Wayne Fruge', Instructor at Port Barre High School was selected 2002 Region Two Advisor of the Year at the 2002 National Skills USA Championships.

2003 SkillsUSA Theme

"STEP UP TO SUCCESS"

