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Press Release

For immediate release

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Gov. Rick Snyder: MAT² program is an innovative partnership between education, business communities

Ceremony for first graduates of technician training program certified to German standard at the Michigan state capitol

Lansing, Michigan, July 13, 2016 – Gov. Rick Snyder today applauded the first graduates of the innovative Michigan Advanced Technician Training (MAT²) program, and thanked participating employers, colleges and partners for their roles in the students' success.

MAT² graduates and participants were recognized by the governor and lawmakers at a Capitol ceremony. Snyder set in place the groundbreaking apprenticeship program in 2013. It connects employers with Michigan residents interested in technical occupations and provides skilled trades training in high-demand career fields. MAT² was inspired by Germany's dual-education system, which combines classroom and workplace experience. Through the program's cooperation with the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest (GACC Midwest) 18 graduates receive certification according to the "German gold standard" set by the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK). "We congratulate the State of Michigan as well as all apprentices, their employers and the participating colleges on this historic occasion: This is the largest class of apprentices in the US to graduate with certification through the German DIHK," says Mark Tomkins, President & CEO of GACC Midwest.



"The MAT² program is a smart investment in our state," Snyder said. "As Michigan's economy continues to grow, the demand for talent to fill the jobs of today and tomorrow has never been greater, especially in the skilled trades. MAT² is ideal because it lets employers develop their own talent and gives students a great start to their careers. Thanks to the support of participating employers and colleges, MAT² is having a direct and positive impact on our state. I applaud these graduates for their success and for taking advantage of this outstanding opportunity."

The students recently graduated from the MAT² mechatronics program offered by Henry Ford College and Oakland Community College. Mechatronics is the combination of electrical, mechanical and electronic competencies. The students earned associate degrees, completed their training periods and all have been



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hired by their employers. “The most effective way to address Michigan’s skills gap is through collaboration and partnerships,” said state Rep. Jim Tedder, vice chair of the House Committee on Workforce and Talent Development and a strong advocate of the MAT² program. “MAT² leverages the resources and expertise of the business, education and economic development communities. The result is a stronger talent pipeline, more good-paying jobs and a more prosperous state.”

Students alternate between classroom instruction and on-the-job training, gaining the necessary hands-on skills and real-world experiences that help them become successful members of the workforce.

“This program is an excellent example of the education and business communities working together,” said Steve Arwood, director of the Michigan Department of Talent and Economic Development. “This is an ideal way to see that students graduate with the most current, in-demand skills that lead to good-paying jobs. Our challenge is to expand this program so more students and companies can have such opportunities.” Participants have their college tuition paid and receive a weekly stipend during their school periods. They also receive an hourly wage during their work periods.

Students can be trained in mechatronics, technical product design, information technology or computer numerical control. Upcoming application deadlines will be announced in September.

In addition to Henry Ford College and Oakland Community College, other college partners are Baker College – Cadillac, Delta College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College and Mott Community College. The MAT² program is administered by the Talent Investment Agency, which is part of the Department of Talent and Economic Development. Visit michigan.gov/tia for more information on MAT² or the Talent Investment Agency.

Based on its previous success, GACC Midwest is working together with multiple partners to expand the dual apprenticeship model across the US. “States, companies, and students have seen that the model works. We look forward to bringing German-style dual apprenticeship programs to further states across the Midwest and beyond,” said Tomkins.

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GACC Midwest has been supporting German and American companies in transatlantic business for over 50 years through services including membership, market entry and business development, career services and recruiting, and events, delegations and publications. GACC Midwest also manages German-style dual apprenticeship programs that address the need for a skilled workforce. For more info, please visit: <http://gaccmidwest.org/en>