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Goodwill Southern California partners with regional manufacturing groups to expand SMI Manufacturing Challenge and Exposition (www.manufacturingchallenge.org)

Los Angeles, CA, April 19, 2017 – Goodwill Southern California (GSC), in partnership with the Small Manufacturers Institute (SMI), Small Manufacturers Association of California (SMA), and the National Tooling and Machining Association, is expanding the SMI Manufacturing Challenge and Exposition to include workforce development and student exposure to manufacturing careers. This international event brings together Universities, Colleges and High Schools from the US and Mexico to demonstrate manufacturing projects with entrepreneurial applications developed and built by student teams. The event will take place on Saturday, April 22nd from 10:00am until 3:30 pm at Goodwill's Community Enrichment Center at Fletcher Square (3150 N. San Fernando Road, Los Angeles 90065).

The Challenge has been held in Los Angeles since 1988. In the most recent years, the Small Manufacturers Institute has been focusing the event on projects with entrepreneurial potential. The event works with students on taking their projects to market by having breakout sessions for the contestants on patenting their products, and on entrepreneurial development. “This event is unique”, stated Marty Mechsner, co-founder of the Small Manufacturers Institute. “The manufacturing companies have set the outcomes of the competition and worked with their academic partners to encourage students to develop projects with real world applications.”

The Challenge is a labor of love for both manufacturing companies and academic leaders who are enjoying the new visibility that manufacturing careers are offering. John Chocholak, past president of the California Industrial Technical Educators Association and Vice President of SMI remarked, “The Challenge represents the best of what can happen when industry and academia work together. These student teams are what America needs to expand - our historic leadership in manufacturing. Unfortunately, this union of great industrial teachers, industry partners and school systems, that will promote manufacturing education and careers, is on life support and it gets harder every year to bring these special competitors to this classic Los Angeles event.”

Goodwill Southern California (GSC) has expanded its historic support for the community and hands-on careers to serve as the Manufacturing Sector Intermediary on behalf of the Los Angeles County Workforce Development, Aging & Community Services and Advance Manufacturing Sector Strategist role on behalf of City of Los Angeles Economic Workforce Development Department. GSC’s participation on the Manufacturing Challenge and Exposition is an example of how public-private partnerships can have a significant impact. “It was clear to us that the Challenge was the type of institutional program where we can maximize the intent of our intermediary role,” stated Simon Lopez, GSC VP of Workforce and Career Development. “Here is SMI’s traditional event, demonstrating the best in manufacturing careers and partnerships,” Lopez continued. “GSC was able to work with the industry stakeholders and take it to the next level by integrating regional workforce resources, manufacturing programs in higher education, manufacturing educational demonstration programs and the Challenge competition, with the exploration by regional youth (both in and out of school), their families and school aged students looking for options.”

The Manufacturing Challenge is truly growing into its “Exposition” title, and will feature:

- A key note speaker from SpaceX
- College and University recruiters
- Student and Youth societies
- Industry Associations promoting Apprenticeship opportunities.
- Manufacturers with job openings and industry and military recruiters looking for entry level manufacturing and engineers.
- Workforce resources offering placement and career assistance at GSC onsite Career Center
- Industry equipment suppliers demonstrating cutting edge technology
- Demonstrations of model academic programs in Robotics, Kids in Motorsports and the Uniquely Abled Program
- Workshops for students and adults in
 - Job interview preparation and resume creation
 - School tuition aid
 - Entrepreneurial career development

- Patent steps for student teams to follow
- SMI workshop on Career Technical Education teaching career paths for students

David Goodreau, Chairman of the Small Manufacturers Association, said “The role of the intermediary has never been more important. There is an urgent need to connect youth to job opportunities created by the enormous number of baby-boomers scheduled to retire from high-paying manufacturing careers. The GSC Intermediary brings us all together and great things always happen from collaboration!” Goodreau continued, “Our partnership with Goodwill Southern California marks a new day in how the public sector can work through an intermediary to strengthen industry organizations and the companies we represent. There is no greater challenge for industry than the task of enhancing its workforce supply chain connection with technically-oriented students in our schools, colleges and universities.”

Key Note Speaker John Dinka, SpaceX Supply Chain Manager, will be discussing opportunities for student engineers in his presentation: *Anyone Can Think Like an Engineer*. This discussion of having an engineering mindset, coaches the Challenge participants in everyday ways they can improve their skills and accomplish their goals.

The Manufacturing Challenge has had ongoing support from the Gene Haas Foundation which has been the national leader in helping students, encumbered workers and veterans receive state-of-the-art training to achieve personal success in manufacturing occupations. The event is truly a bottom-up approach that promotes manufacturing careers among ingenious students that are the future of what manufacturing will become. Additionally, the event has international roots with Mexican high schools and colleges attending for the 3rd year uniting with fellow American students to challenge each other and create lifelong relationships that will strengthen their careers.

About Goodwill Southern California:

Transforming lives through the power of work, Goodwill Southern California (GSC) serves individuals with disabilities or other vocational challenges, as well as businesses, by providing education, training, work experience and job placement services. Each year, GSC prepares and places thousands of individuals into sustainable employment through programs and services offered at three campuses, Career Resource Centers, WorkSource Centers, Deaf, Youth and Veteran Employment Programs throughout Los Angeles (north of Rosecrans Ave.), Riverside and San Bernardino counties. GSC supports its mission with proceeds generated from 81 stores and 46 attended donation centers. GSC spends 95 percent of its budget on programs and services. Committed to caring for the earth, last year GSC diverted 100 million pounds of reusable or recyclable goods from landfills. Goodwill is Good for Everyone!

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