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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) Will Celebrate Workforce Development on TN LEAP Day

NASHVILLE – *February 15* – The Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) will showcase its successes at sites across Tennessee on TN LEAP Day, February 29th. Education and employer sites throughout the twelve LEAP site areas will demonstrate the skills students are learning through the program and provide students an opportunity to meet with employers.

TN LEAP Day, which will coincide with “Leap Day” on February 29th, will be host to twelve concurrent events at each of the LEAP programs across Tennessee. Activities at the local events include students participating in job shadowing with area employers, student-led classroom demonstrations of advanced manufacturing equipment, and open houses for students and employers at higher education institutions.

“LEAP programs have made tremendous strides in so many local communities to connect students with career paths that have major growth potential,” said Russ Deaton, interim executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), which administers LEAP. “TN LEAP Day is a way for employers, institutions, and students to connect with the local communities and inspire even further local involvement and student participation.”

LEAP works with educators and employers to identify and close skills gaps that hinder the economic development of communities throughout the state. In January 2015, THEC awarded \$10 million in state-funded LEAP grants to twelve local programs across the state. The community-led partnerships, comprised of industry partners, postsecondary institutions, K12 educators, and workforce development professionals, were tasked with aligning educational training and postsecondary credentials with the needs of regional industry employers.

The [2016 LEAP Report](#), released by THEC in January, noted that, as of December 2015, 1,591 high school students have enrolled in courses enhanced or funded by LEAP and 630 college students have enrolled in LEAP-supported programs. In total, 13,363 students have engaged in LEAP-funded

programming, including work-based learning experiences, career exploration programs, and other industry-focused learning activities.

LEAP was established in 2013 when the Tennessee General Assembly passed Public Chapter 338, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris (R-Collierville) and House Majority Leader Gerald McCormick (R-Chattanooga). The program is administered by THEC and advised by the Governor's Workforce Sub-Cabinet.

To attend any of the events listed below, please contact Kate Derrick at THEC (615-532-0428, kate.derrick@tn.gov) or the event contacted listed.

Summary of TN LEAP Day Events

LEAP Program: Advanced Manufacturing and Workforce Center

Location: Clinton Higher Education and Workforce Training Facility, 214 Nave Street, Clinton, TN

Time: 9:00am-11:00am EST

Event Contact: Gordon Williams, williamsg1@roanestate.edu, 865-354-3000 ext. 4899

Dual enrollment students from Anderson County Schools will demonstrate robotics equipment at Roane State Community College's advanced manufacturing and workforce facility in Clinton. Students will also have the opportunity to meet with local employers and learn more about positions available in the local area.

LEAP Program: Advanced Manufacturing in the Upper Cumberland

Location: Cookeville High School, 1 Cavalier Dr, Cookeville, TN

Date/Time: 11:05am-12:00pm CST

Event Contact: Joel Chappell, joel.chappell@tcatlivingston.edu, 931-823-5525

The LEAP program, led by TCAT Livingston, is hosting a demonstration event at Cookeville High School. Five students that previously participated in the National CTE Letter of Intent Signing Day will demonstrate mechatronics equipment to showcase the strengths of the dual enrollment program to high school students during the school lunch period.

LEAP Program: Certified Production Technician Pathway to Advanced Manufacturing

Location: Partnered LEAP high schools, sponsored by Dyersburg State Community College

Time: All Day

Event Contact: Lori Kelley-Burdine, kelley@nwtworks.org, 731-286-3585

Local industry partners will visit LEAP-sponsored Certified Production Technician (CPT) classrooms in high schools throughout Benton, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Lauderdale, Obion, Tipton, and Weakley counties. Students enrolled in CPT courses are mastering a number of core competencies related to manufacturing production at the front line including safety, quality assurance, and maintenance. Visiting employers will be provided the chance to speak with students, observe classroom progress, and serve as a resource for students to ask questions.

LEAP Program: Closing Gaps through Partnerships

Location: Spot-Lowe Vocational Center, 1771 Jason Maxwell Boulevard Lewisburg, TN

Time: 12:00-1:30pm CST

Contact: Tonja Garrett, Tonja.Garrett@sctworkforce.org, 931-363-9550

Local industry partners have been invited to attend an open house at Spot-Lowe Vocational Center to tour the classrooms and interact with students as they showcase mechatronics equipment at the facility. Several employers will then lead in a panel discussion for the students to cover topics such as current work opportunities in the field of mechatronics and the expectations of the modern workforce.

LEAP Program: Filling the Gaps between Industry and Employees with Manufacturing Technology

Location: TCAT Shelbyville branch/partner campuses

Time: 9:30-Noon CST; 4:00pm-6:00pm CST (at Franklin County facility only)

Contact: Ivan Jones, ivan.jones@tcatshelbyville.edu, 931-685-5013

TCAT Shelbyville will be coordinating a professional development day for students enrolled in Industrial Maintenance courses at the four LEAP branch facilities: Franklin County Business Development Center (Tullahoma), Middle Tennessee Education Center (Shelbyville), Don Sundquist Center for Advanced Technologies (Fayetteville), and the Adult Education Center (Lewisburg). Students will have the opportunity to learn from industry partners and career counselors about the expectations of the workforce and complete a resume and interviewing workshop.

LEAP Program: IT Pathway Collaborative

Locations: Various industry partner headquarters; ***press event hosted at 500 Interstate Blvd South, Nashville, TN***

Time: Job shadow tours throughout the morning; ***press event 3:30pm-5:00pm CST***

Contact: Colleen Hoy, colleen.hoy@technologycouncil.com, 276-732-3091

The IT Pathway LEAP project, led by the Nashville Technology Council (NTC), will host a city-wide job shadowing experience for high school students across Davidson and Williamson counties. Students will travel to a variety of IT industry partners in the region to tour the facilities and learn about professional opportunities in the information technology field. Following the tours, the NTC will host a press event to announce the launch of the new workforce platform, WeBuildTech.com.

LEAP Program: LEAP Memphis

Location: University of Memphis Holiday Inn, 3700 Central Ave, Memphis, TN

Time: 11:30am-1:00pm CST

Contact: John Churchill, jchurchill@amacw.com, 901-212-3715

The Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce (GMACW) will be hosting a professional development day for students enrolled in the Career Readiness Training courses at Whitehaven and Trezevant High Schools. Students will attend a luncheon at the University of Memphis Holiday Inn where industry partners, postsecondary institutions, and workforce development groups will lead a panel discussion to educate students about the expectations in the modern workforce and the educational resources available to students as they pursue postsecondary degrees.

LEAP Program: LEAP to Success

Location: Jackson State Community College, McWherter Center, 2046 North Parkway, Jackson, TN

Time: 11:30am-1:00pm CST

Contact: Vicki Bunch, vbunch@jsc.edu, 731-424-3520 ext. 50307

Jackson State has invited local legislators and industry partners to campus to celebrate the LEAP program's activities over the last year. Attendees will be able to learn about the courses that have been initiated by the LEAP to Success partner institutions, hear success stories from participants in the program, and take tours of the facilities.

LEAP Program: Mechatronics and Manufacturing for Soldiers and Students.

Location: TCAT Dickson Advanced Manufacturing Campus, 250 Beasley Dr, Dickson, TN; Akebono Brake Corporation, 780 International Blvd, Clarksville, TN

Time: 8:00am-2:30pm CST

Event Contact: Arrita Summers, Arrita.summers@tcatdickson.edu, 615-441-6220

Creek Wood High School mechatronics students will visit the Mechatronics Technology program at TCAT Dickson to tour the mechatronics labs and learn about employment pathways with regional employers. M2S2 is also coordinating a plant tour for transitioning veterans enrolled in the Ft. Campbell's mechatronic program. Soldiers will be able to tour the Akebono Brake Corporation plant and learn about potential employment opportunities in the region.

LEAP Program: MAD About Technology: Mobile Application Development

Location: Warf Building, Room 139, Columbia State Community College, 665 Hampshire Pike, Columbia, TN

Time: March 1; 1:00pm-3:00pm CST (*Please note: this event is taking place on March 1st.*)

Event Contact: Dr. Dearl Lampley, dlampley@columbiastate.edu, 931-540-2678

On March 1, students enrolled the Mobile Application Development program at Columbia state will demonstrate their application development skills at newly renovated Mobile Applications Development Lab at Columbia State. Students will also have the opportunity to meet with local employers and learn more about positions available in the local area.

LEAP Program: Regional Apprenticeship Preparedness Program (RAPP)

Locations: Partnered High Schools – sponsored by TCAT Athens

Time: 11:00am-1:00pm EST

Contact: Scott Packett, scott.packett@tcatathens.edu, 423-744-2599

The RAPP program has initiated an essay contest for students to express their interest and understanding of the Mechatronics career pathway, training requirements, and professional opportunities. RAPP will host a an award ceremony and celebration during the lunch periods at Bradley Central, Bradley Walker Valley, Polk County, Meigs County, McMinn County, and McMinn Central High Schools.

LEAP Program: Strengthening the Lakeway Links

Location: Morristown West High School, 1 Trojan TRL, Morristown, TN

Time: 5:00pm-6:30pm EST

Contact: Chris Edmonds, cedmonds@tcatmorristown.edu,

Dual enrollment high school students will demonstrate mechatronics and electricity equipment at Morristown West High School's newly renovated mechatronics lab. Students will also meet with local employers and learn more about positions available in the area.

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission coordinates two systems of higher education, the University of Tennessee institutions governed by the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees, and the state universities, community colleges, and colleges of applied technology governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents. There are nine public universities, two special purpose institutes, 13 community colleges, and 27 colleges of applied technology in Tennessee that educate over 240,000 students.