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## **Local manufacturing apprenticeship program first of its kind in Florida**

**Port St. Lucie/April 18, 2018** -- This summer, 30 Treasure Coast residents will be the very first in the State of Florida to learn a skilled trade while earning money through a dynamic, fast-track comprehensive manufacturing apprenticeship program. An apprenticeship is a combination of paid on-the-job learning and related classroom instruction.

Sponsored by the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association (TCMA) and funded by CareerSource Research Coast through a Sector Strategies Grant from CareerSource Florida, the premiere program will enroll up to 30 men and women in an 18-month “earn-while you-learn” apprenticeship program. Apprentices will earn at least \$11 at the start of the program and, with wage increases every six months, can earn up to \$18 per hour at program completion.

“We received word from the Department of Education in early April that our proposed Industrial Manufacturing Technician (IMT) standards were approved, and we’ve been quickly rolling out the program in collaboration with the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association, school districts and economic development organizations,” said Marcelo Dossantos, vice president of strategic development for CareerSource Research Coast.

“We have six participating employers now and are looking for more,” said Susan Haggard, sector strategy coordinator for CareerSource Research Coast.

Apprentices will be selected by the TCMA Apprenticeship Committee. Once approved, apprentices begin their on-the-job learning immediately through employment with local manufacturers. Evening classes will start this summer through the Indian River State College’s Corporate and Community Training Institute (CCTI).

“Our members are excited that our organization, just 18 short months after its founding, is part of this first-in-the-state breakthrough opportunity,” said TCMA President Jerry Jacques. “And, we are grateful for the commitment and dedication of everyone at CareerSource Research Coast, the EDC and IRSC who helped make the apprenticeship program happen.”

“The manufacturers we have participating in this program are among the best in our region,” said Pete Tesch, president of the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County (EDC). “This is an unmatched opportunity for our manufacturers and for the apprentices.”

Upon completion apprentices will earn a national, industry-recognized credential, the Industrial Manufacturing Technician (IMT) and the Manufacturers Skills Standards Council (MSSC) Certified Production Technician (CPT) certification. After graduating from the program, the apprentice will know how to set up, operate, monitor and control production equipment, improve manufacturing processes, and understand the business of manufacturing.

Employers interested in participating should contact Susan Haggard at [shaggard@careersourcerc.com](mailto:shaggard@careersourcerc.com).

Prospective apprentices should contact Nadege Pierre at CareerSource Research Coast at 866-482-4473 Ext. 508 or email [npierre@careersourcerc.com](mailto:npierre@careersourcerc.com).

### **About the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association**

The not-for-profit Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association was formed in 2016 to promote the collective interests of manufacturing, distribution and wholesale trade companies, advocate public policy and focus on mutual areas of concern within the business sector. For more information, visit <http://www.tcmamfg.com>.

### **About the Workforce Readiness Task Force**

The Workforce Readiness Task Force grew out of the 2017 Skills Gap Initiative. Made up of business, workforce and education representatives from across the Treasure Coast, the task force serves as a steering committee driving action plans that can bridge the gap between the region’s current workforce skills and those skills needed by area employers. For more information, contact the Economic Development Council of St Lucie County at 772.336.6250 or <http://www.youredc.com>.