

# The Whiteboard

The Whiteboard features articles pertinent to wood technology and design education and industry-education alliances.

Summer 2010

## SkillsUSA is a Valuable Partner in Strengthening our Industry

*We are a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled work force. Our mission is to help its members become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens.*



### SkillsUSA

SkillsUSA (formerly known as VICA) is a national nonprofit organization serving high school and college students preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations. It consists of more than 300,000 student and instructor members, with 1,700 students in Cabinetmaking or Woodworking programs –this is the future of our industry in training!

There are two main components of SkillsUSA: the skill contests and the Work Force Ready System.

### SkillsUSA Contests and Championships

Students compete in local and state skills contests ultimately advancing to the annual SkillsUSA NLSC (National Leadership & Skills Conference) in June in Kansas City, MO. Students compete in nearly 100 different contests which cover a broad range of Career & Technical Education subjects, including Technical Drafting, Cabinetmaking and Carpentry.



*Over 60 students competing in the 2010 SkillsUSA national cabinetmaking championship.*

The national cabinetmaking championship is an eight-hour contest, where students are scored on several criteria including their cut list, machine skills, safety and the completed and finished product. This year's cabinetmaking project was a European style

frameless cabinet with 32 mm internal system holes and an edge-banded laminated top. The project was created and developed by

leaders of the Woodwork Career Alliance (WCA); the extremely complex design was intended to showcase many woodworking skills. There were 66 competitors (approximately 70% high school and 30% post secondary). Click here to see pictures from the contest: <http://skillsusanlcs2010.shutterstock.com/>

### SkillsUSA Work Force Ready System

The Work Force Ready System is a set of assessments created by industry professionals and supported by industry, education and policy leaders. The **Skill Connect Assessment** is an online exam proctored by an instructor. Students earning a minimum score receive a certificate which "helps candidates prove their technical skills and knowledge to potential employers." In some industries, the Skill Connect Assessments serve as a starting point for industry

### Learn More...SkillsUSA Resources

[SkillsUSA.org](http://SkillsUSA.org)

Information about SkillsUSA and the annual national conference (NLSC).

[WorkForceReadySystem.org](http://WorkForceReadySystem.org)

Industry-specific assessment and certification program information.

[EverydayRealHeroes.org](http://EverydayRealHeroes.org)

Created for WorldSkills 2009 and the World Team competitors and directly geared toward industry supporters.

[WorldSkills.org](http://WorldSkills.org)

The biennial WorldSkills championships.

[woodworkcareer.org](http://woodworkcareer.org)

The Woodwork Career Alliance, which is developing skill standards for our industry and working to align the SkillsUSA cabinetmaking contest and assessment with industry standards.

certification; an ultimate goal for the cabinetmaking assessment and certification is that it will serve as a base for the wood industry's skill standards certification.

### **Get Involved!**

Here are ways that you can get involved in SkillsUSA:

- Search for your state SkillsUSA chapter (Google: SkillsUSA your state). Contact them and ask how you can help as an industry partner
- Donate equipment or materials for a local program or the local, state or national cabinetmaking contest
- Be a judge for the cabinetmaking contest
- Volunteer to help with contest setup or teardown
- Exhibit at TECHSPO, the SkillsUSA NLSC trade show, the biggest Industrial & Technology Education show in the nation

Programs like SkillsUSA are critical to our industry's future success. The students that participate in SkillsUSA know what it takes to succeed and are enthusiastic about careers in our industry – let's support them!

*If you would like to get involved with SkillsUSA and want to know how to start, please contact AWFS Education Manager Adria Torrez (323) 215-0311 or [adria@awfs.org](mailto:adria@awfs.org)*

*Comments on this or previous articles? Suggestions for future Whiteboard topics? Please e-mail to [adria@awfs.org](mailto:adria@awfs.org)*

### **Photo caption:**

*Over 60 students competing in the 2010 SkillsUSA national cabinetmaking championship.*