

WHO WE ARE:

The NSSB is building a voluntary national system of skill standards, assessment and certification that will enhance the ability of the United States to compete effectively in a global economy. These skills are being identified by industry in full partnership with education, labor, civil rights and community-based organizations. The standards will be based on high performance work and will be portable across industry sectors.

General Motors CEO Smith Commends NSSB and its Progress

With momentum building towards the creation of a voluntary national system of skill standards, assessment and certification, the NSSB held its quarterly Board meeting in Detroit, MI, on May 17-18, 1999. Among the highlights was an address to the NSSB from John F. Smith, Jr., Chairman and CEO of General Motors (GM), who discussed the importance of skill standards to American industry.

"More than ever, we compete in a global economy," Smith said. "And, more than ever, we need to ensure that the education and skills of our workforce are competitive with those in other countries. The good news is that we are making progress – and the NSSB's work in setting clear standards and certification requirements has played a major role in that progress. General Motors fully supports the NSSB's work, and we are very heavily involved in developing and applying new manufacturing standards through the MSSC."

Smith and General Motors have been long-time supporters of the skill standards effort. GM serves on the advisory council of the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC), the Voluntary Partnership established in 1998 to develop standards for the manufacturing, installation, and repair industries.

Other highlights of the Detroit meeting included the swearing in of one new



John F. Smith, Jr., Chairman and CEO of General Motors (GM), addressing NSSB Board meeting in Detroit.

Board member, Susan Auld, and the reappointment of three current Board members – James R. Houghton, Paul F. Cole, and Alan L. Wurtzel (see story on page 3). The Detroit meeting also highlighted the progress being made by the MSSC and the Sales and Service Voluntary Partnership (S&SVP) in developing skill standards for those industry sectors. NSSB officials expect core standards in these sectors – representing nearly 40 percent of the American workforce – to be in place by the end of the year. ◀

News Scan

NSSB Recognition Awards

The NSSB is pleased to announce that it has voted approval for three organizations to receive the NSSB Recognition Award. The organizations are the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and the Northwest Center for Emerging Technologies (NWCET).

NIMS is a non-profit organization founded in 1995 to support the development of a skilled workforce for the metalworking industry. Since 1997, more than 700 individuals have attained NIMS certification; more than 30 States use NIMS standards, a number of whom endorse it as the State's official skill standards for metalworking training.



The NBPTS is a private, non-profit organization that focuses on the voluntary certification of experienced elementary and

secondary school teachers. The first NBPTS certification was awarded in 1995; since then, over 900 teachers in more than 40 States and the District of Columbia have been awarded National Board Certificates in a wide variety of subjects.

The mission of the NWCET is to support advanced technological education for information technology by strengthening science, math, and technical curricula through teacher and student support systems. NWCET coordinates a network of partnerships among Bellevue Community College, Microsoft, the Boeing Corporation, and many other private industry and educational institutions.

The NSSB Recognition Award is part of NSSB's Awards program, which showcases and promotes organizations that demonstrate leadership and effectiveness in the development of skill standards, assessment and/or certification. Any organization or coalition of organizations is eligible for the award, including employers, States, unions, educational or training institutions or systems, associations, and prospective NSSB Voluntary Partnerships.



Upcoming NSSB Board Meetings

- Friday, October 1, 1999 - Washington, DC
- Friday, December 10, 1999 - Washington, DC

Message from the Executive Director



Edie West
Executive Director

We are now just a few short months away from validating the first-ever NSSB-endorsed voluntary national skill standards in the manufacturing and sales and service industry sectors. The NSSB would like to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of those involved in this exciting endeavor. Special recognition is given for excellent leadership and dedication to John Rauschenberger, Chair of the MSSC and Manager of Workforce Resources at

the Ford Motor Company, and Deborah Masten, Chairman of S&SVP, Inc. and Manager of Human Resources at JC Penney Company.

Work has begun for the development of a truly comprehensive national certification system. The first NSSB Certification Forum took place on July 20 at IBM in Washington, DC, and was attended by over 50 representatives of national certification and testing agencies and associations. The purpose of this important event was to discuss ways to broaden the national system with certification providers playing a significant role.

Visit our Web site at www.nssb.org to hear comments from John F. Smith, Jr., Chairman and CEO of General Motors about the value of skill standards in a global economy and to see the most recent postings to the certification and apprenticeship database.

Manufacturing Skill Standards Development Underway

Since June, the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) has been conducting extensive research to develop skill standards for manufacturing and related installation and repair industries. The MSSC has been working with several local institutions across the country to conduct "expert panels" of front-line workers, team leaders, and first-line supervisors in major manufacturing hubs across the U.S. On July 27, the MSSC completed the first of three rounds of this research.

During Round I, manufacturing workers focused their efforts on developing the critical work functions (CWF) and key activities (KA) for the six manufacturing concentrations (manufacturing production process development; logistics and inventory control; production; production quality assurance; health, safety and environmental assurance; and maintenance, installation and repair). They identified the broad groupings of work that they do and the tasks they need to do to accomplish their work. In total, twenty-three panels were conducted in the following cities: Appleton, WI; Cleveland, OH; Dallas, TX; Fremont, CA; Harrisburg, PA; Jamestown, NC; Madison, WI; Merrillville, IN; Orlando, FL; Philadelphia, PA; Rochester, NY; Rockford, IL; San Jose, CA; Seattle, WA; St. Louis, MO; and Torrence, CA.



Over 150 individuals from leading manufacturing companies participated in Round I. Panel participants were enthusiastic about the MSSC's goals and the research that is being conducted. One participant in St. Louis remarked, "I hope the effort succeeds because I think it could be the salvation of the U.S. economy." One North Carolina participant stated, "Skill standards will lead to a more skilled, informed, and productive workforce."

What will happen next? The MSSC will collect the data from this round and analyze it for use in the next rounds of research. Round II research is currently scheduled for August 23 – September 3. It will focus on Performance Indicators. Round III is scheduled for September 27 – October 8, and will focus on the knowledge and skills needed to

successfully perform the work.

For more information about the MSSC, contact Bridget Brown, MSSC Project Co-director at 202-216-2746 or by E-mail at brownb@nacfam.org or visit the MSSC Web site at www.msscusa.org for the most up-to-date information. ◀

Need More Information?

Visit the NSSB Clearinghouse. One of the most valuable public services offered by NSSB is its comprehensive collection of print and electronic information pertaining to skill standards. The Clearinghouse is home to more than 1,000 printed documents, in the form of original research produced by NSSB, as well as information gathered from academic sources and industry coalitions. The Clearinghouse also maintains a database of abstracts of skill standards-related material, available to the public on the NSSB Web site, www.nssb.org.

Personnel in the Clearinghouse field telephone, written, and electronic information requests on a range of topics from Board members, staff and the public. If you have a question related to skill standards, please feel free to contact the Clearinghouse by phone at 202-254-8628, or via E-mail: information@nssb.org.

In addition, the Clearinghouse Committee supports ongoing analysis of issues such as the relationship between NSSB skill standards taxonomy and classification systems such as O*NET. The Clearinghouse Committee is currently devising a feasibility study to explore the option of establishing a national database of information on NSSB-endorsed certifications.

Sales & Service Voluntary Partnership Incorporates

The Sales & Service Voluntary Partnership (S&SVP) reached an important milestone on July 17, 1999, when it announced that it had officially incorporated as Sales & Service Voluntary Partnership, Inc. (S&SVP, Inc.) The first incorporation of one of the NSSB's Voluntary Partnerships marks a significant step forward for the NSSB, which remains dedicated to launching autonomous business-led coalitions that will establish skill standards and assessment in most major U.S. industries.

The incorporation of S&SVP, Inc. creates a separate, legal entity that will ensure the continuation of skill standards development, assessment, and implementation for sales and service industries including retail trade, wholesale trade, real estate, and personal service.

"Incorporation allows us greater control and stability as we develop the skill standards system for our industries," S&SVP, Inc. Chairman and Manager of Human Resources, JC Penney Company, Deborah Masten, said. "As a corporation, the S&SVP, Inc. Board will be able to make independent decisions that will ultimately help current employees, people searching for a career, and businesses in all sales and service fields."

The S&SVP, Inc. is filed under the Non-Profit Corporation Act and is currently filing for 501(C)(3) non-profit status. The corporation will be operating exclusively for educational, scientific, and charitable purposes, including lessening the burden of government. S&SVP, Inc. will continue to support and promote the recognition of employees and employers involved in sales and service industries.

S&SVP, Inc. anticipates the completion of core skill standards common to employees across the sales and service industries by December 1999. In addition to developing skill standards, S&SVP, Inc. will:

- Guide the use of the corporation's skill standards by educational institutions through the development of curriculum guides, best practice publications, pilot programs, and learning material development;
- Create a forum for key stakeholders in the sales and service industries including employers, trade associations, labor organizations, employee associations, education, government, and community, civil rights, and policy groups;
- Grant recognition upon successful application and completion of the corporation's examinations and certification criteria;
- Build a committed, professional workforce, and raise the image and opportunity associated with sales and service careers; and
- Establish programs that promote and support the reliance on the corporation's credentials by the general public and regulatory bodies.

To date, the Sales & Service Voluntary Partnership has been funded by a grant from NSSB to the National Retail Institute (NRI), the research and education foundation at the National Retail Federation (NRF). S&SVP Inc.'s articles and by-laws recognize the support of the NRF in establishing the corporation, and note the corporation's desire to maintain a close relationship with the NRF. The corporation will continue to be funded by a grant from the NSSB, which is managed by the NRI. The corporation anticipates using NSSB funding through the skill standards development and assessment phase. S&SVP, Inc. will secure additional funding from other private and public funding sources.

For more information about the S&SVP, visit their Web site at www.ssvolpart.org. ◀

President Clinton Appoints New Board Members

A flurry of activity from the White House in recent months has resulted in three new Board Members and several re-appointments. The three new Board Members are George Becker, International President of the United Steelworkers of America; Ray Marshall, former U.S. Secretary of Labor; and Susan Auld, President of Auld, Bishop & Adams. Re-appointments to the NSSB include James Houghton, Paul Cole, Marc Tucker, and Alan Wurtzel.

George Becker has served as the International President of the United Steelworkers of America since 1993. Before his election as President, Mr. Becker served two terms as International Vice President for Administration. As an AFL-CIO Vice President, Mr. Becker chairs the AFL-CIO Executive Council's key Economic Policy Committee. He has also served on the President's Export Council and the U.S. Trade and Environmental Policy Advisory Committee, and currently serves on the Federal Trade Deficit Review Commission. In addition, he is an Executive Committee Member of the International Metalworkers Federation and Chairman of the World Rubber Council of the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine, and General Workers' Unions.

Ray Marshall served as Secretary of Labor during the Carter Administration. He was Co-Chairman of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, whose report, "America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages," recommended the creation of a national organization to oversee the development of a voluntary national skill standards system. Since 1981, Marshall has served as the Audre and Bernard Rapoport Centennial Chair in Economics and Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a member of the Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations, and the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the National Center on Education and the Economy. He is a member of the Program Development Committee of the Human Resources Development Institute, and has served on both the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development and the Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children.

Susan Auld has an extensive background in education, government, business, and human services. She served as the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Employment and Training from 1991-1998, where she instituted job-training programs that address job placement in growth industries. She also served as the Co-Chair of the Human Resources Investment Council. In addition, she

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Implementing Skill Standards in Minnesota

While the NSSB is busy building the framework for a voluntary national system of skill standards, assessment and certification, states such as Minnesota are also helping to pave the way for such a system. Thomas Girtz, Skill Standards Coordinator for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, says that significant progress has occurred in just 18 months in Minnesota's effort to implement national skill standards. Girtz began his work in February 1998 with funding from a federal School-to-Work grant.

"The hallmark in Minnesota has been the cooperation and collaboration among government agencies, the business community, higher education, labor, and secondary education," said Girtz.

From the beginning, the Department of Economic Security, the Department of Labor and Industry, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and the Department of Children, Families and Learning have worked hand-in-glove with business and labor representatives to plan and promote the implementation of voluntary national skill standards. Working closely with the Department of Children, Families and Learning's Office of Lifework Development, Girtz has traveled the state promoting

public awareness of voluntary national skill standards.

In June 1998, the Minnesota Skill Standards Task Force (a focus group of business, education, government and labor representatives) met to determine a vision, expectations, and goals for statewide skill standards implementation. By December, the Governor's Workforce Development Council had endorsed the plan, and the promotional campaign had resulted in numerous requests for more information about skill standards and their uses.

Since then, successes in Minnesota have included: receiving State Legislative funding for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' Targeted Industry Partnership initiative; developing a skill standards collection in the Department of Children, Families and Learning's Library; linking national skill standards and Minnesota educational quality initiatives; collaborating with Department of Children, Families and Learning on presenting Career Development Institutes throughout the state; publishing the "Minnesota Resource Guide to Voluntary Skill Standards" that provides contact and ordering information for academic and occupational skill standards; and providing training on skill standards integration

software.

"National standards will provide an invaluable communication tool, enabling educators, business and government representatives to talk together about a common agenda to assure that both current and future employees get accurate information about the skills required in today's high-performance workplaces," Girtz said.

The concept of skill standards is not new to Minnesota educational institutions. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' career, vocational, and technical programs have historically relied on Minnesota business, industry, and labor to identify and validate content that reflects the skills necessary for students to succeed in the world of work.

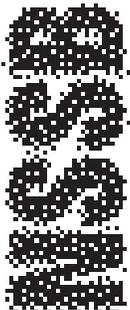
The work of the NSSB is embraced and welcomed by Minnesota educators, who believe that implementing industry-driven, skill standards will ensure that career, technical and professional program majors will provide the highest quality employment opportunities for Minnesota's workforce. For more information about skill standards in Minnesota, contact Thomas Girtz by phone, 651-296-5799, fax, 651-297-1814, or E-mail, tom.girtz@so.mnscu.edu. ◀◀

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is an eight-year veteran of the Vermont House of Representatives, two of those as House Majority Leader. Ms. Auld has taught at the high school level and has served on several school boards and educational advisory committees. Currently, she is President of a firm that provides governmental affairs, public relations, and project management services.

James R. Houghton, Chairman of the Board Emeritus of Corning, Inc., was first appointed to the NSSB in 1995. Marc Tucker, who has served on the NSSB since 1995, is President of the National Center on Education and the Economy. Paul Cole, appointed to the NSSB in 1995, has served since 1984 as Secretary-Treasurer of the New York State AFL-CIO, and as Vice President of

the American Federation of Teachers since 1974. Alan Wurtzel, a NSSB Board Member since 1995, is Vice Chairman of the Board of Circuit City Stores, Inc.



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