



News Release

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Cuesta College Career/Technical Education Students Bring Home National SkillsUSA Championship



Six Cuesta College career/technical education students competed in the National **SkillsUSA** Leadership and Skills Conference held in Kansas City, Missouri June 24-27, 2008, earning three nationally ranked medals.

Eric Leach earned a gold medal and national championship in Automotive Service Technology; Mark Millar earned a bronze medal in Carpentry; Matt Schwaiger earned a bronze medal in Collision Refinishing. Also competing at the national level was the team of James Schwind and Jeremy Edmunds in Mechatronics, and Nate Wells in Welding.

Leach was required to solve complex problems such as diagnosing electrical faults, service and diagnosing an air conditioning system, installing engine timing components, pressure testing an automatic transmission, performing a job interview, identifying safety and pollution components, and taking a written test.

Millar had to build a simulated upstairs bedroom that had components of regular wood framing, steel framing, hip roof, stairs, window moldings and drywall. Schwaiger had to properly prepare and paint several body panels and properly describe appropriate safety and pollution concerns. This included color matching, sanding, masking and painting.

More than 5,000 outstanding career and technical education students from all over the United States competed in the hands-on competition in 91 different trade, technical, health related and leadership fields. Each student competing was the top finisher in his or her individual state or US territory.

SkillsUSA is the national organization for students in trade, industrial, technical and health occupations education. It sponsors the SkillsUSA Championships annually to recognize the achievements of career and technical education students and to encourage them to strive for excellence and pride in their chosen occupations.

The contests are planned by technical committees made up of representatives of labor and management, and are designed to test the skills needed for a successful entry-level performance in given occupational fields. Safety practices and procedures – an area of great concern to labor and management alike – are judged and graded and constitute a portion of a contestant's score.

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