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Date: 2/18/2016 12:19:47 PM  
Subject: State Chamber Announces Workforce Innovator Awards Winners at 2016 Workforce Development Symposium

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 18, 2016

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## **State Chamber Announces Workforce Innovator Awards Winners at 2016 Workforce Development Symposium**

**COLUMBIA, S.C.** –The South Carolina Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the small, medium, and large employer award winners for this year's Workforce Innovator Award. The winners represent the Chamber members who have used their own resources and ingenuity to implement private sector workforce development solutions to address the skills gap and help create a South Carolina workforce of the future. The following businesses were awarded at the 2016 Workforce Symposium, hosted in partnership with SCDEW and SWDB and presented by Bank of America.

### **Winners:**

#### **Total Comfort Solutions, Columbia**

Total Comfort Solutions has a long-standing relationship with the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, Midlands Technical College and Midlands Education and Business Alliance (MEBA). As the company struggled to build its workforce, they formed a partnership through the Chamber and MEBA in order to implement creative ways to interest students in a career in HVAC. Company technicians would go into schools throughout the area and tell students what they loved about their jobs. They shared with students a personal experience of a job that many did not know about. Soon the enrollment in the HVAC degree programs at Midlands Tech doubled. This increased pool of technicians enabled the Total Comfort Solutions to grow. As Total Comfort Solutions grew from one office to six in South Carolina and Georgia, Midlands Tech became a strategic partner, providing tailored training not only for technical skills but also for soft skills, communication skills, leadership and team building skills. Total Comfort Solutions now partners with technical colleges across the state as well as Regional Education Centers and local Workforce Investment Boards to tailor apprenticeship programs, internship programs and QuickJobs training to fill its workforce needs.

#### **MTU America, Graniteville**

Originally conceived in 2012, in partnership with Aiken County School District, Apprenticeship Carolina, and Aiken Technical College, MTU America's apprenticeship program gives high school juniors and seniors a structured training system to pursue careers in manufacturing. The program provides students an opportunity to earn a wage while they learn, and gain real-life professional experience and a career path with opportunity for growth. MTU America's apprentices earn the Industrial Mechanic Basic certification, an international credential that qualifies them to work in any manufacturing facility in South Carolina or Germany. By developing the skills and confidence of South Carolina's high schoolers, MTU America's

apprenticeship program is improving the local labor pool and increasing the number of career opportunities for South Carolina's young people.

### **Michelin North America, Greenville**

The Michelin Technical Scholars Program enables qualified students to attain a two-year Engineering Technology associate degree (e.g. Electronic Engineering Technology or Mechatronics) from a technical college while working part time for Michelin. The program provides the student with a unique opportunity to gain academic and practical experience at the same time. Michelin Technical Scholars receive scholarships to cover the cost of tuition, fees and books for the program, along with competitive pay and part-time work and benefits. Once they complete the two-year program, students become full time employees. This program has helped Michelin to attract talent in a very competitive field. Today, Michelin employs more than 60 Technical Scholars throughout its North American plants.

\*Business size definition: Small Employer: Less than 300 SC employees; Medium Employer: 301 to 999 SC employees; Large Employer: 1000+ SC employees.

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