



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 1, 2008

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VIRGINIA RANKS 6TH IN STATE TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE INDEX
-Index Credits VCATS as Contributor to Virginia's Success-

RICHMOND, VA – The Milken Institute gave Virginia a 6th place overall ranking in their 2008 State Technology and Science Index. The Commonwealth achieved 2nd-place finishes in the components for percentage of high-tech establishment births and percentage of establishments in high-tech industries. In addition, having a number of high-tech government contractors, Virginia ranks 5th in the Technology and Science Work Force Composite Index.

The State Technology and Science Index ranks states on 77 indicators that comprise five equally weighted major composites that create a picture of how well each state is performing in today's highly competitive knowledge-based economy. The 2008 edition expands on the contributions of human capital formation and the commercialization of intellectual property. The analysis started with examining research and development, as well as innovation capacities, all of which are considered the raw materials of technology-based economic development.

The Index gave credit to Virginia for seeking to bolster its future technical work force by enlisting the Virginia Biotechnology Association and the Virginia Manufacturers Association to lead a statewide effort known as the Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills (VCATS), to recruit, train, and certify skilled manufacturing technicians.

The certification will ensure manufacturers are hiring individuals with basic knowledge of the advanced technologies common in today's manufacturing environment. Sheryl Bryan, Director of VCATS, is inundated with concerns from companies about the ability of Virginia's work force to keep up with continually progressing technologies. "One of the reasons we created the VCATS training and certification program was to ensure a continual flow of qualified employees into the growing number of industries using advanced technologies. We want to keep Virginia at the top of the list for high-tech companies, investors and research funding."

In October 2007 the State Science and Technology Institute (SSTI) awarded VCATS its highest award for exceptional achievement in technology-based workforce development. VCATS was also awarded the Southern Growth Innovator Award in June 2007 by the Southern Growth Policies Board. For more information on the Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills, go to www.vacats.org.

About The Virginia Biotechnology Association – www.vabio.org

The Virginia Biotechnology Association, founded in 1992, is the statewide non-profit organization that promotes the scientific and economic impact of the life sciences industry in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Nearly 160 biotechnology, pharmaceutical and medical device companies are based in Virginia, mainly clustered around universities in Blacksburg, Charlottesville, Richmond, Norfolk and Northern Virginia.

About the Virginia Manufacturers Association – www.vamanufacturers.com

The Virginia Manufacturers Association develops and advocates for constructive public policies, and supports a broad array of business services and programs to help ensure that Virginia manufacturing companies can be productive, profitable and competitive in Virginia. Virginia's 6,000 manufacturers employ over 288,000 jobs, contribute \$31 billion to the gross state product, and account for over 84% of the state's exports to the global economy.

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