



For Immediate Release

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Workforce Florida Announces \$2-Million in Training, Job Expansion Grants to Advance Florida's Ports and International Trade Sector

Jacksonville, August 17, 2011 - In a move aimed at strengthening and advancing Florida's international trade and exports, Workforce Florida today joined with private business and public K-20 education partners to announce \$2 million in training and career education initiatives that will benefit hundreds of current and future workers.

The three-pronged effort, stemming from recommendations in the Florida Chamber Foundation's 2010 Florida Trade and Logistics Study, is a collaboration involving engineering firm Reynolds, Smith and Hills Inc.; the American Society of Transportation and Logistics of Jacksonville; the University of North Florida; and Broward College. Together with Workforce Florida, the partners will leverage the initiatives to enhance the role of international trade in Florida's economy and related job creation and advancement.

"This private-public collaboration is exactly what Florida needs to win in the increasingly competitive environment," said Workforce Florida President and CEO Chris Hart IV. "These training initiatives illustrate our commitment and agility in responding to the workforce talent needs of today and tomorrow, as Florida seeks to capture a greater share of the growing global economy."

The initiatives include:

- Nearly \$1 million in Quick Response Training (QRT) grants to train approximately 1,000 new and existing workers at port businesses as well as manufacturing, logistics and related companies aimed at retaining jobs and expanding international trade and exports in Florida. Headquartered in Jacksonville, Reynolds, Smith and Hills, one of the nation's leading facilities and infrastructure consulting engineering firms, is partnering with the University of North Florida's Division of Continuing Education to coordinate

the training.

- \$600,000 in Quick Response Training grants to train up to 600 people who work for air cargo related businesses, again with an eye toward boosting productivity and competitiveness for Florida companies to increase the state's export volume. The Air Cargo QRT Statewide Consortium project will be coordinated through Broward College with Reynolds, Smith and Hills.
- \$600,000 to help create new career academies to develop pipeline talent for international trade jobs and forge stronger partnerships between local workforce boards and Florida's deepwater seaports. The project, led by the Jacksonville Chapter of the American Society of Transportation and Logistics, will create up to 15 Career Academies in high schools throughout the state focused on international trade and logistics and advanced manufacturing for international trade opportunities.

"We are proud to be part of such an important partnership for Florida's economy," said Leerie Jenkins, CEO of Reynolds, Smith and Hills. "For businesses like ours, a talented workforce is the cornerstone of success and growth. These training initiatives will help strengthen and expand Florida's pipeline of trade, logistics and manufacturing."

"This training program is perfectly aligned to our mission of education and global competition," said University of North Florida President John Delaney, former mayor of Jacksonville. "It is through strategic and coordinated efforts like these that we will provide our current and future workforce with the skills and knowledge they need."

The success of Florida's QRT Program was a key factor in the state's recent national recognition for its workforce training. In June, Florida earned the top spot in the second annual Enterprising States report released by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Chamber Foundation. The Florida Chamber Foundation's Florida Trade and Logistics Study, released in December 2010, identified seven major opportunities for Florida to increase its role as an international trade hub. One recommendation was to expand vocational, associate degree and workforce training programs to support skill requirements for trade, logistics and manufacturing industries.

"Florida's population is expected to grow by five million people by the year 2030, and will need 1.52 million more jobs in the next 10 years," said Dale A. Brill, Ph.D., president of the Florida Chamber Foundation. "Workforce Florida's investment in the talent supply for the industries of the future will help position Florida to be the No. 1 job creating state in the nation."

Administered by Workforce Florida, state-funded QRT grants advance job creation and retention by supporting customized skills upgrade training for new and expanding businesses. Businesses receiving these grants decide not only what training is needed, but who delivers it to their employees. Forty-two Florida companies received training grants during the last fiscal year to hire and train more than 8,000 new or currently employed workers. For every dollar of public funding

invested in QRT, these companies will invest nearly \$8 in training. Workers have experienced a 36-percent average wage increase following training using QRT.

The program is recognized nationally for its lack-of-red-tape requirements and low overhead. Underscoring QRT's contributions to Florida's economic development efforts, the Florida Legislature - with the support of Governor Rick Scott - allocated \$6 million (up from \$3.3 million) for grants to businesses in the current fiscal year that started July 1. The grants are performance-based and reimburse businesses for a portion of their training costs; businesses must contribute matching investment to qualify for QRT funds.

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About Workforce Florida

Workforce Florida Inc. is the statewide workforce investment board led by business and government leaders and charged with overseeing Florida's workforce system, which includes the Agency for Workforce Innovation and 24 Regional Workforce Boards. Its mission is to develop strategies that help Floridians enter, remain and advance in the workforce while supporting economic development priorities and strengthening the state's business climate. Learn more about Florida's workforce resources and solutions at www.EmployFlorida.com.

Workforce Florida is an equal opportunity employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. The voice telephone number in this document may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.

About the University of North Florida

At the University of North Florida, students are the first priority. UNF recognizes that every student is an individual, with different goals, learning styles and needs. Students are provided opportunities for life-changing learning experiences, including internships, study abroad and other off-campus programs and dynamic research projects. UNF has an average enrollment of more than 16,000 students and offers five colleges of distinction: the Coggin College of Business, the Brooks College of Health, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Computing, Engineering and Construction and the College of Education and Human Services.

About Reynolds, Smith and Hills Inc.

Reynolds, Smith and Hills Inc. (RS&H) is one of the leading facilities and infrastructure consulting engineering firms in the United States with over 34 office locations across the country. RS&H is an employee-owned Florida-based corporation headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. The company maintains additional Florida offices in Fort Myers, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, Merritt Island, Miami, Punta Gorda, Sarasota, Tallahassee and Tampa. The Reynolds, Smith and Hills organization includes a wholly owned subsidiary, Reynolds, Smith and Hills CS, Incorporated, based in Orlando, Florida.