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Collings Awarded IT Scholarship

Bismarck, N.D. – Jake Collings, a student at Grand Forks Red River High School, achieved top honors in the computer programming division at the state SkillsUSA competition April 27. Collings received a \$1,000 scholarship and \$500 to participate in the national competition in Kansas City in June. The scholarship was sponsored by the Information Technology Council of North Dakota (ITCND).

“The IT industry has made it a priority to get students interested in IT careers. These students have shown the interest and scholarships are one way to keep them engaged,” says ITCND President Gary Inman of Echelon Corporation in Fargo. “There currently are and will continue to be high-quality, high-wage IT job opportunities for them in North Dakota.”

ITCND sponsored the scholarships as part of its IT Career Awareness Program. The goal of the program is to inform students, parents and educators of the state’s IT career opportunities in an effort to secure an IT workforce into the future. A recent study reports North Dakota’s IT industry will have 2,500 (1,200 new and 1,300 replacement) open positions over the next decade. This equals one-third of the current IT industry workforce of 7,500.

These numbers reflect the workforce needed only in the core IT industries of computer systems design, software publishing and data processing and hosting. These areas represent only 10 percent of the state’s total IT workers. Not taken into account are roughly 90 percent of IT workers employed in the state’s other top industries including agriculture, health care, energy, manufacturing and financial services.

“IT is an integral component of virtually every sector and industry statewide. This magnifies the need for a high-quality IT workforce,” says Inman.

ITCND is the leading information technology advocacy organization in the state. It was founded by North Dakota business, government and education leaders to encourage the use, growth and development of information technology in North Dakota. For more information, visit ITCND’s website at www.itcnd.org.

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