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MakerMinded Web Portal Puts Manufacturing Education and Awareness at Kentucky Students' Fingertips

Thursday, October 13, 2016, Frankfort, KY—Today the Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow (LIFT) national manufacturing institute, in partnership with Tennessee Tech University's iCube, the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers (KAM), and colleague national Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation (IACMI), announced the launch of MakerMinded across Kentucky. MakerMinded is a new online STEM learning and competition platform designed to impassion students about advanced manufacturing and provide them with transformational STEM learning experiences that set them on track towards 21st century manufacturing careers.

MakerMinded's digital platform will connect Kentucky students to leading-edge STEM and advanced manufacturing education experiences, while galvanizing participating students and schools around a student-driven, pro-manufacturing campaign and competition. The platform's goal is to provide students access to the right programs that will encourage and prepare them for further education and careers in advanced manufacturing. Examples of programs included on the platform are Learning Blade, a mission-driven online STEM curriculum; Science Olympiad, standards-based science challenges; and the "LIFT Assembly Line" Virtual Reality game.

In its National Manufacturing Day Fact Sheet, The White House highlighted MakerMinded as a promising new program that is inspiring and preparing the next generation of manufacturers and STEM practitioners.

"Manufacturers across the country lament a widening skills gap—which is projected to leave 2.5 million jobs unfilled over the next decade if we don't act now to engage and prepare a skilled workforce," said Emily DeRocco, director, education and workforce, LIFT. "MakerMinded is a game-changing strategy that has the potential to re-write the future of not only manufacturing, but of today's young students, who need the inspiration, experiences and skills to pursue meaningful careers."

"Kentucky has over 3,300 manufacturers employing over 250,000 people," said Greg Higdon, President and CEO, Kentucky Association of Manufacturers. "MakerMinded is helping to inspire and prepare the next generation of manufacturing leaders and ensure Kentucky continues to be a great place to innovate and make things."

Watch a video to discover how MakerMinded works.

Students and schools interested in joining the MakerMinded campaign should visit www.makerminded.com.

About LIFT – Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow

LIFT is a Detroit-based, public-private partnership committed to the development and deployment of advanced lightweight metal manufacturing technologies, and implementing education and training initiatives to better prepare the workforce today and in the future. LIFT is one of the founding institutes of Manufacturing USA, and is funded in part by the Department of Defense with management through the Office of Naval Research.

About KAM

Established in 1911, the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers is Kentucky's most effective advocate for manufacturers. KAM's mission is to protect and create a manufacturing-friendly environment in Kentucky. In addition to advocating, KAM connects, educates and provides cost-saving programs and products to members. For more information, go to **www.KAM.us.com**.

About iCube

Tennessee Tech University's iCube is a place where students and faculty Imagine, Inspire, and Innovate. We are a leader in advancing collaborative solutions with extensive experience in public policy marketing campaigns and virtual reality development. To learn more about our center, please visit **www.ttuicube.com.**