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FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr, Congressman Joe Wilson, NWSA and NATE Leaders Participate in Workforce Development Event at Aiken Technical College

Commissioner Carr Unveils 5G Jobs Initiative at Event

(Fairfax, Virginia) – Industry leaders representing the National Wireless Safety Alliance (NWSA) and the National Association of Tower Erectors (NATE) were active participants at last week’s workforce development event that was hosted by Aiken Technical College in Graniteville, South Carolina. Participants included NWSA Executive Director Duane MacEntee, NWSA Board of Directors member Pat Cipov, NWSA Board of Governors member Dr. Gemma Frock and NATE Board of Directors member Shama Ray. FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr and Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC) were also on hand as special guests at the event.

With workforce development a top priority for companies at every layer of the wireless infrastructure ecosystem, the event helped shine a spotlight on the successful Tower Installation Program at Aiken Technical College. During the event, participants conducted a tour and talked to students of the college’s Basic Tower and Wireless Installation certificate program. The program involves a 7-week curriculum model consisting of both classroom and field-based instruction intended to provide students with the necessary theory and hands-on education to receive a job in the applicable field. Topics covered include safety, basic rigging, fall protection, principles of electricity, fiber optics, wireless technology, cell components, antenna basics, and spectrum management. Students who graduate from the program can immediately seek employment in the industry or can elect to progress to the Advanced Tower and Wireless Installation Certificate and work towards the Associate in Applied Science at Aiken Technical College.

“We are very proud of our Tower Installation Program at Aiken Technical College and believe this is a model that can be successfully emulated across the country to help produce a future pipeline of skilled workers,” stated Dr. Gemma Frock, VP of Institutional Effectiveness & Accreditation at Aiken Technical College and a member of the NWSA Board of Governors. “I would like to thank Commissioner Carr, Congressman Wilson and the industry leaders the who attended last week’s event,” added Frock.

FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr utilized the occasion of the event to unveil a 5G jobs initiative that can help ensure the United States has the skilled workforce in place to build next-generation wireless networks and win the race to 5G. In particular, Carr identified the need for more certified Telecom Tower Technicians (known as “TTT-1’s”) and how the U.S. can achieve that goal by expanding on Aiken’s model program.

“NWSA appreciated the opportunity to participate in last week’s dynamic event at Aiken Technical College,” said Executive Director Duane MacEntee. “After training occurs, NWSA certification is an integral component of ensuring that the tower technician workforce is equipped with the skill-sets that are required to deploy and maintain the networks and infrastructure that are so vital to the country’s future. “It is heartening to see stakeholders from academia, federal government, Congress and private industry collaborate to solve these workforce development challenges head-on,” MacEntee added.

“Developing a robust pipeline of skilled workers is a top priority for NATE and it was a privilege for me to represent the Association at the event last week,” added NATE Board of Directors member Shama Ray who also serves as the Association’s Workforce Development Group Chairwoman. “NATE believes that passage of the Communications Jobs Training Act legislation that was recently introduced in Congress is a critical step in order to provide a funding vehicle and springboard for more programs at the community college, technical school and military transition program levels. Over the coming months, NATE and our 880 member companies will be working hard at the grassroots level to support this legislation,” said Ray.

Industry workers, companies and stakeholders are encouraged to visit the NWSA website at www.nws-a.org to learn more about the organization and how to begin the process of obtaining certification. To learn more about NATE, visit www.natehome.com.

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About National Wireless Safety Alliance

The NWSA, headquartered in Fairfax, Virginia, is a non-profit organization that has been established to provide thorough, independent assessments of knowledge and skills and provide verifiable worker certification in order to enhance safety, reduce workplace risk, improve quality, encourage training, and recognize the skilled professionals who work on towers and other non-standard structures.