



**ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

Representing Alabama's Public Two-Year College System

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor proclaims April as National Community College Month in Alabama

MONTGOMERY – On Thursday afternoon, Gov. Bob Riley signed a proclamation proclaiming April as National Community College Month in Alabama to highlight the opportunities Alabama's two-year community colleges provide and the critical role they play in workforce development.

The proclamation notes that the Alabama Community College System and its member institutions:

- *Partner with business, industry, and government, provides customized training, job skills training, and workforce development services for more than 150,000 Alabama workers and job seekers.*
- *Are the primary source of specialized transition services and retraining for the nearly 10,000 employees adversely affected and dislocated by industrial downsizing and drastic cuts in the textile industry.*
- *Continue to live up to the system's mission of providing accessible quality educational opportunities, promoting economic growth, and enhancing the quality of life for the people of Alabama.*

In signing the proclamation, Gov. Riley urged all Alabamians and business and industry leaders, who are committed to developing Alabama's workforce for the 21st century, to use and support their local community colleges.

Alabama's public community college system is the state's single largest system of public higher education and is the state's most affordable and accessible system of higher education. Alabama's 26 community and technical colleges, including Marion Military Institute, along with Athens State University, the Alabama Industrial Development Training Institute, and the

– more –

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Alabama Technology Network provided a broad array of education services for more than 290,000 Alabamians in 2007.

- During the fall of 2007, 41 percent of all undergraduate students in public institutions of higher education in Alabama attended two-year colleges.
- Fifty-two percent of all college freshmen in Alabama attend two-year colleges. With an average age of 27, 95% of Alabama Community College System students are from Alabama.
- More than 458,000 students in Alabama's community colleges have utilized the Statewide Articulation and Transfer Reporting System (STARS) to assure the transfer of their academic work toward bachelor's degrees at four-year institutions since 1998, when STARS began.
- The Adult Education/GED Program, part of the Alabama two-year college system's workforce development effort, served nearly 33,000 Alabamians last year.
- Today, community colleges are the nation's leading source of registered nurses. Statewide in 2006-07, according to the Alabama Board of Nursing, a total of 1,461 of the two-year college system's Registered Nursing (RN) students passed the National Council Licensure Examinations for Registered Nurses, accounting for about 54% of those tested statewide; and 694 Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) passed the NCLEX-LPN exams (91% of the state total). A total of 3,029 students completed all nursing and allied health programs during that same time period.

Community colleges allow students to stay close to home, receive a strong academic foundation in a student-focused environment with small classes, and benefit from flexible class schedules, 50 percent lower tuition rates, and the ability to transfer coursework to any public college or university within the state.

The Alabama State Board of Education recently passed a resolution declaring April as National Community College Month and recognizing the accomplishments of the state's community college system. In addition to increasing educational opportunities through affordable access to education, Alabama's public community and technical colleges are uniquely situated to provide workforce training in partnership with local businesses, industries, and government entities. They also serve as a resource for community events, continuing education, and cultural arts.

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