

## **Grainger Kicks Off Skilled Trades Awareness Month by Launching a Playbook that Connects Students, Schools and Businesses**

*Company also awards scholarships through the Grainger Tools for Tomorrow® Scholarship Program*

**CHICAGO, OCTOBER 8, 2013** – [Grainger](#) (NYSE: GWW), the leading broad line supplier of maintenance, repair and operating (MRO) products serving businesses and institutions, today launched an interactive skilled trades playbook, called “*Dynamic Partnerships for a New Economy*,” designed to connect businesses and community colleges in an effort to boost local workforce development. The Playbook, developed in partnership with [Skills for America's Future](#), serves as a one-stop, how-to guide with tips, best practices and other tools to help businesses and community colleges work together to train and advance workers in the industrial skilled trades. **Visit [www.skilledtradesplaybook.org](http://www.skilledtradesplaybook.org) to download the full Skilled Trades Playbook and learn more about the skills gap challenge.**

Many businesses that rely on skilled workers, such as machinists, welders and electricians, report difficulty finding qualified individuals to fill open jobs. In fact, skilled trades have been the hardest segment of the workforce for employers to staff for the last three years, according to [ManpowerGroup](#). Partnerships that help align the skill needs of businesses with the curriculum and training offered by community colleges are a solution to assist in building a stronger workforce, but many don't know where to start. Solving this dilemma was the catalyst for developing the Playbook.

“Employers no longer have the luxury of remaining on the sidelines,” said Grainger Chairman, President, and CEO, Jim Ryan. “Grainger is committed to promoting the importance of jobs in the industrial skilled trades, and this Playbook offers practical solutions to help close the growing skills gap.”

The Playbook concept was born out of the “[Partnerships in Practice](#)” event sponsored by Grainger at the Aspen Institute earlier this year, where business leaders, community college presidents and workforce experts discussed the scope of the skills gap, the challenges faced, and the need for businesses and schools to work together to prepare the workforce for careers in the skilled trades. The ideas from this event, combined with examples of local partnerships that are preparing skilled trades workers, serve as the foundation of the Playbook.

### **Grainger Awards Scholarships to Industrial Skilled Trades Students Nationwide**

Many report that part of the challenge in finding trained workers comes from misperceptions of the skilled trades industry. To promote the innovation and importance of careers in the industrial skilled trades, Grainger, in conjunction with the [American Association of Community Colleges](#) (AACC), launched the Grainger Tools for Tomorrow scholarship program in 2006 to help students in the industrial skilled trades realize their educational and career goals. This year, Grainger will award a Grainger Tools for Tomorrow scholarship to 129 students at 70 community colleges in the U.S., with one-half of the scholarships targeted to U.S. Armed Forces veterans. Upon graduation, each student receives a customized Westward® toolkit from Grainger to jump start their career.

“Community colleges are the nation’s training ground for careers in the skilled trades and play a vital role in providing education and career paths for students and workers,” said American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) President and CEO, Dr. Walter G. Bumphus. “We are proud of our partnership with Grainger and salute the Grainger Tools for Tomorrow scholarship winners who will make a difference in our communities through a skilled trade.”

One such student is Tools for Tomorrow scholarship recipient John Nawrot, an Electrical Automated Systems student at Joliet Junior College in Joliet, Ill.

“After spending more than 20 years in the finance industry, the company I worked for went out of business and I knew it was time for a career change to learn a new trade,” said Nawrot. “I have always been intrigued by how things work, so I enrolled at Joliet Junior College in the fall of 2012 to pursue a degree in Applied Science with certificates in Electrical and Industrial Electronics and Maintenance. This has turned out to be the right choice as I recently started a new job in my field with plans to graduate in 2014. I’m excited about the future and thankful to my family, instructors and Grainger for the support in helping me achieve my goals.”

Grainger will celebrate the skilled trades and highlight student success stories throughout Skilled Trades Awareness Month and beyond. Join the conversation by using the hashtag #skilledtrades.

To view a full list of scholarship winners and to learn more about Grainger’s commitment to skilled trades, visit: [www.grainger.com/skilledtrades](http://www.grainger.com/skilledtrades).

#### **ABOUT GRAINGER**

W.W. Grainger, Inc., with 2012 sales of \$9 billion, is North America's leading broad line supplier of [maintenance, repair and operating products](#), with expanding global operations.

#### **ABOUT SKILLS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE**

[The Aspen Institute's Skills for America's Future program](#) identifies solutions in which education and training providers work together with employers to prepare individuals with the skills that will allow American businesses to be more productive, innovative and competitive.

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