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Vision Shared conference to address workforce and college completion

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - In order to help ensure West Virginia citizens have the degrees and credentials they need to meet the region's workforce needs, Vision Shared is hosting a statewide workforce development conference, "Certified Success: Competing in Today's Economy" on September 29 - 30, 2011 at Oglebay Resort in Wheeling, WV. This summit will bring together participants including educators, workforce training providers, employers, legislators and community leaders among others.

First Lady Joanne Tomblin will present as a keynote speaker at the event. Tomblin, who is president of Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, serves as the co-chair of West Virginia's College Completion Task Force. This sixteen-member group was formed by the Higher Education Policy Commission Chancellor Brian Noland and Community and Technical College System Chancellor James Skidmore to focus the challenge of increasing college completion in West Virginia. The First Lady will be introduced by Jamie Merisotis, president of the Lumina Foundation. Lumina is the country's largest foundation devoted to increasing college access and completion and is working to increase the proportion of Americans with high quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by 2025.

Additional presenters include Travis Reindl of the National Governors Association; Dr. Brian Noland, chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission; James Skidmore, chancellor of the West Virginia Community and Technical College System; and Dr. Tom Witt from West Virginia University's Bureau of Business and Economic Research. In 2010, Vision Shared adopted a strategic plan for 2011-2014 with four focus areas including research and commercialization, entrepreneurship, education and workforce development.

"Our goal for this conference is to develop action steps for increasing West Virginia's rate of postsecondary credential completion in response to current and future workforce needs," said Vision Shared president Rebecca McPhail Randolph. "There is a great deal of potential for job growth in the state and we hope to shine a spotlight on West Virginia's workforce needs and career trends."

To register or for more information about the conference visit www.visionshared.com or contact Jenny Lancaster at 304-654-0875. A discounted room rate is available at Oglebay Resort for those who mention "Workforce Development." Call 800-624-6988 to make your reservation. The conference is sponsored by The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, The WV Higher Education Policy Commission, The WV Community and Technical College System, The Regional Economic Development Partnership, Brickstreet and American Public University.

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