



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Adam Kessler, [adam@awfs.org](mailto:adam@awfs.org)  
323.215.0312**

## **Woodworking Industry Rallies to Support SkillsUSA California Contests**

*Companies and Industry Professionals Commit Time, Tools and Supplies for Students*

ANAHEIM, CA – April 27, 2017 - Royal Plywood, Blum, Colonial Saw/Lamello, Hafele, ESI, Decore-ative Specialties, Grex Tools, and West Wood Products generously donated nearly \$10,000 in supplies, tools, and giveaways for students at the 2017 SkillsUSA California State Cabinetmaking and Introductory Woodworking contest Championships, held Saturday, April 22 at the Town & Country Resort and Convention Center in San Diego. Staff and industry volunteers from the Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers® (AWFS®) assisted as contest coordinators, judges, and with overall contest support.



A total of 19 students from ten schools across the state competed in the Cabinetmaking contest for medals and the opportunity to represent California at the SkillsUSA National Championships. The students built a desk incorporating a complete cabinet and utilizing Blum offset hinges for the frameless cabinet and Blum TANDEM glides for the drawer box, both donated by Blum. San Diego-area Blum rep Gary Riley loaned a Blum hinge boring machine and was on-hand to provide a demonstration of the hinge and TANDEM slide installation and assist during the contest. Decorative hardware for the drawer and door were provided by Kemp Hardware. ESI donated edge-

banding, while all of the solid stock and sheet goods came from Royal Plywood of Cerritos, CA. In a new “twist” this year, Hafele provided stainless steel table legs, cabinet levelers, and pop-up USB grommets, which the students installed in their desks by using a hole saw. Decore-ative Specialties donated sample doors and drawer fronts and West Wood Products provided pre-grooved drawer sides, which saved the students time in the contest and enhanced the overall look of the finished product. Colonial Saw loaned a Lamello Zeta joinery machine for the students to try and donated Tenso fasteners and Grex Tools loaned nail guns with guides and provided nails for all students to use during the contest.

Students had nine hours over two days to finish the project and judges used criteria such as accuracy of measurements and use of tools and machinery to determine the scores. The project plans were developed by AWFS Education Manager Adam Kessler, along with support from Cabinetmaking contest coordinator Saul Martin of Architectural Woodworking Company (Los Angeles). The judging panel for the contests consisted of Southern California-based experienced industry professionals. The contestants were allowed to take home their finished desks after the event. Blum provided “goodie” bags with tape measures, Pozi screwdrivers, and pencils, and Crown Ace Hardware, a San Diego area family store, donated prizes for the contest medalists.

Phil Oien of San Pasqual High School (Escondido, CA) received the highest score and the Gold medal in the state high school cabinetmaking competition and has been invited to compete at the SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills

Championships Louisville, Kentucky, June 19-22. He will represent California and compete against other top scoring high school competitors from other states.

Meanwhile, 14 first-year woodworking students from eight schools across the state competed in the state Introductory Woodworking contest, intended to introduce students to the SkillsUSA competitive environment and encourage them to return to compete in the Cabinetmaking contest the following year. The students built a tool tote with a small drawer and rotating handle, incorporating different joinery methods and woodworking techniques. All material was donated by Royal Plywood. Cameron Helvey and Joshua Torbick of Helvey Design Studio, and representatives from the Palomar College Cabinet and Furniture Technology program (San Diego, CA) volunteered as judges. San Jacinto High School woodworking instructor Roy Castillo served as contest coordinator and Adam Kessler of AWFS developed the project plans.

### **Over 50 Woodworking Students Compete in 2017 Southern California Regional Contests**

Blum, Inc., Royal Plywood and Grex Tools supported the SkillsUSA California Regional woodworking contests, held in January. Over fifty high school students competed in the Cabinetmaking and the Introductory Woodworking contests combined in the Southern California regional events. The Cabinetmaking contestants prepared a bill of materials and built a small cabinet with a drawer which could be used as a laptop stand, while the Introductory Woodworking contestants built a tool tote during the three hour contest. Royal Plywood provided over \$700 in material for the two region 3 (Los Angeles area) woodworking contests. Blum, Inc. contributed tape measures, calipers, pencils and bags and Grex loaned nail guns with guides to all California regions for their contests. A team of industry professionals volunteered their time to develop the contests and serve as contest coordinators, judges, saw monitors and assisted with other critical aspects of the contest execution.

If you would like to learn more about SkillsUSA woodworking or participate in future SkillsUSA California woodworking events, please contact Adam Kessler at [adam@awfs.org](mailto:adam@awfs.org) or (323) 215-0312 for more information.

**About SkillsUSA:** SkillsUSA is one of the largest national career & technical student organizations in the nation. It promotes job readiness with skills and leadership training and supports students entering skilled trades.

To see information on both events, including photos, sponsor and volunteer information, contest plans, and results, visit these pages:

SkillsUSA CA 2017 State Woodworking Contests: <http://www.awfs.org/education/skillsusa/skillsusa-ca-2017-state-woodworking-contests/>

SkillsUSA CA 2017 Region 3 Woodworking Contests: <http://www.awfs.org/education/skillsusa/skillsusa-ca-2017-region-3-woodworking-contests/>

For high resolution images and image captioning information, contact Adam Kessler at [adam@awfs.org](mailto:adam@awfs.org) or (323) 215-0312.