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**"Reaching the Stars" CTE Summit Showcases
Benefits of Career Technical Education
Space Enterprises' Technician Needs Featured at Forum**

Sacramento, CA -- Former NASA astronaut, Ken Reightler, helped launch California's first annual Career Technical Education (CTE) Summit today, where policymakers saw the benefits of CTE in action and were urged to expand CTE instruction in the state's schools.

Reightler was joined by Lt. Gov. John Garamendi, Attorney General Jerry Brown, Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell, legislators, educators and dozens of students from around the state, who demonstrated the skills they've gained through CTE at exhibits showcasing robotics, construction, agriculture, engineering, aerospace, biotechnology and other career areas.

"CTE has been shown to remarkably impact many students' desire to remain in school and to revitalize their commitment to education," featured speaker Ken Gray, author of the book *Other Ways to Win*, told the over 300 people assembled. "We need to ensure that students know there are multiple pathways, in addition to college, that they can take to be successful and fulfilled."

"To remain competitive, the workforce needs a different mix of education and practical training," stated Andrea Seastrand, executive director of the California Space Authority. "While we need critical paths for those who desire advanced degrees, we must balance our educational efforts. Failing to serve practically-minded students ignores an entire population and subjects industry with a technician workforce that is not prepared and has no depth. This summit put the spot light on this failure."

"The message coming out of this summit is very clear," said Jack Gregg, executive director of the California Space Education and Workforce Institute. "The California workforce is not made up of just a single industry or a simple set of skills. For multiple industries to compete in a complex global market we need to invest in CTE activities and programs."

The summit featured a NASA exhibit and panel discussion about the Constellation Program's Orion, the crew exploration vehicle to be used for missions to the moon and

California Space Authority is a nonprofit organization supporting California's commercial, civil and national security space stakeholders. Governed by a statewide board of directors, CSA works closely with the State of California, industry, other government, education, workforce entities and academia to support space enterprise development and expansion statewide.

eventually Mars.

"Career Technical Education gave me the foundation to launch my career in the electronics and aerospace industry. It provided me with the skills I needed as a technician to work at Aerojet on many programs including NASA's Orion program. In my 25 years in the field, I have always seen a real demand for skilled technicians and we must do all we can to ensure we have these highly skilled workers in the future," said Aerojet Instrumentation and Controls Technician, Kevin Schneider.

The summit also featured testimonials from parents, teachers and students who have benefited from CTE, along with business owners who warned about a growing shortage of skilled workers. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the technician jobs of today can provide meaningful, living-wages capable of sustaining families.

"It's getting increasingly difficult to find workers with the skills and knowledge needed in today's high-tech workplace," said ACE Clearwater President Kellie Johnson, an aerospace subcontractor and supplier. "My business and California's economy can't compete without skilled workers, making the need to expand CTE instruction very urgent and very real."

Legislators discussed ways to expand CTE and agreed on a resolution to support state and local education policy reforms to make CTE an integral part of every student's education. More than 70 Democrat and Republican Legislators signed the resolution which can be seen at: www.cmta.net/cte_resolution.pdf

"I have proposed that all high school students be required to take a minimum of two CTE courses in order to graduate" said State Senator Tom Torlakson. "We need to ensure that the Legislature takes action and restores CTE to its rightful place in California education."

"It's clear that CTE allows students to explore potential careers and reinforces the theories and concepts of core academics through hands-on application," continued Andrea Seastrand. "The *Reaching the Stars* Summit demonstrated that California can't afford to keep 21st Century technical education from our students. We can have all the engineers possible but without a qualified technician workforce to build what the engineers design, what good are the engineers?"

NASA astronaut Ken Reightler might have said it best in his concluding presentation, "Who will be the next generation that will get us to Mars?"

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