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PRESS RELEASE

Mississippi Colleges Collaborate with ETA International to Develop a Basic Electronics Systems Certification

ETA[®] International was chosen by three Mississippi community colleges to create and administer an accredited third-party certification to cover the knowledge and skills required for successful entry-level careers in Basic Electronics Systems. The intent is to introduce a foundation of skills (in a wide variety of electronic industries) needed by technical personnel to advance their competency and efficiency with their career endeavors.

Greencastle, January 22, 2019: [ETA International](#) recently released the new [Basic Systems Technician \(BST\)](#) stand-alone certification exam designed for individuals being trained in the basic foundational levels of electronics used in troubleshooting systems and their functions but not to component-level circuit analysis.

ETA began this effort over two years ago, and when three community colleges in Mississippi approached ETA to develop and administer a Technical Skills Attainment exam (TSA) for Mississippi's new systems-based curriculum for electronics-based courses (such as instrumentation and automation controls) to assess knowledge that entry-level technicians need to know, regardless of the electronics discipline, ETA earnestly brought in their Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to complete the certification.

"ETA's expertise will allow us to measure Technical Skill Attainment that will provide potential



Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Jackson County Campus, subject matter experts were instrumental in the development of the BST certification. Pictured (L-R): John Poelma, Technical Department Chair, Electronics/Instrumentation Instructor; Charles Hardt, Career and Technical Education Instructor; Aaron Cleveland, Electronics/Instrumentation Instructor.

employers with a tool for evaluating student success and possible future employment with their organizations," said John Poelma, Technical Department Chair, Electronics/Instrumentation Instructor, Jackson County Campus, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC).

MGCCC, Meridian Community College and East Mississippi Community College enthusiastically joined the endeavor and said they selected partnering with ETA International because the trade association utilizes SMEs working in industry who assist in the creation of certification exams. A third party-administered exam to measure TSA is a requirement by the Federal Government for Perkins funding and other grant money.

"As instructors of these courses, we possess knowledge of our industry partners' expectations and employment requirements," said Poelma. "We have quarterly face-to-face meetings with our industry partners and receive feedback on our students who have been hired. This feedback provides us with

the strengths and weaknesses in our training programs. The BST certification test represents the technical knowledge required by our corporate sponsors."

Richard Agard, RESIma, who is a volunteer subject matter expert to the BST committee and instructor with Philadelphia Fiber Optic Training, South East Pennsylvania Travel Authority, said, "Today, industry is more in need of people who can use technology rather than people who have an understanding of the theory and physics behind electronics and this certification will better identify the skills and understanding needed by industry today."

Agard went on to say that the BST focuses on electronic systems as opposed to discrete components because much of the innovation in the electronics industry today is done by problem solving to meet needs by adapting existing technology to new uses.

When asked what kinds of careers are possible for people holding the BST certification, Agard said any industry or organization that utilizes technology could be in need of people with this certification. "The thing that is special about electronics technology today is that it is so adaptive. It can be utilized in the home, by small business or by large industry. It can provide control and monitoring locally when needed and it can also make these options available remotely across the country," he said.

The following knowledge topics, which Basic Systems Technicians (BST) are expected to learn in preparation for the ETA International's BST certification written examination, include: basic safety; principles for problem solving; manufacturing principles and processes; tools and techniques; copper wiring, cable and connectors; power sourcing; electronics system circuit processes; industrial devices and automation controls; mechanical fastening processes; and test equipment.

The BST is a foundational electronics systems certification. The next concentration up in knowledge is the Associate Certified Electronics Technician (CETA) or the Systems Level Technician (soon to be released).

ETA applauds the efforts of the BST committee: Joanna Alford, East MS CC, (MS); Rich Agard, FOI, RESIma, Philadelphia Fiber Optic Training, SEPTA, (PA); John Baldwin, CETsr, Chairman, ETA International, (MN); Dr. Cedric Bradley, MS Gulf Coast CC, (MS); Richard Booth, FOI, FOT Empire H.S., (AZ); Aaron Cleveland, MS Gulf Coast CC, (MS); Joe Cook, East MS CC, (MS); Karl Eilers, LAS, ETA International, (MN); Charlie Hardt, MS Gulf Coast CC, (MS); Ben Harris; Kimberly Jones, MCCB, State BoE, (MS); Dwayne LaFontaine, MS Gulf Coast CC, (MS); Bob Lovelace, M.Ed. East MS CC, (MS); Jeff Mori, Eastern Westmoreland CTE, (PA); John Poelma, II MS Gulf Coast CC, (MS); John Shows, MS Gulf Coast CC, (MS); Jay Thompson, CETsr, TacticalRF, (AZ, IN); Jason Throop East MS CC, (MS); Rob Walker, CETsr Walker & Assoc., (TX); A.J. Wiesenfeld, P.E., CETsr, AJWiesenfeld & Assoc., (TX); Ira Wiesenfeld, P.E., CETms-RF IWATSI, (TX); Bill Woodward, P.E., FOD U.S. Federal Contractor; and several industry professionals who wish to remain anonymous.

About ETA - Since 1978, ETA has delivered over 200,000 certification examinations successfully. Widely recognized and frequently used in worker job selection, hiring processes, pay increases, and advancements, ETA certifications are often required as companies bid on contracts. ETA's certifications are personal and travel with the individual, regardless of employment or status change and measure competencies of persons, not products or vendors. All ETA certifications are accredited through the International Certification Accreditation Council (ICAC) and align with the ISO-17024 standard. www.eta-i.org

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