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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Photo credit to ABYC. Approved for media use)

Caption: ABYC Lead Instructor Mike Bonicker judges the Marine Service Technology competition at the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference

Marine Service Students Put Skills to the Test at SkillsUSA National Conference

ABYC and industry partners judge hands-on competition recognizing emerging marine talent

ATLANTA (June 11, 2026) – The American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC), in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, Yamaha, Suzuki, Mercury, Honda and the National Marine Electronics Association (NMEA), participated in and judged the Marine Service Technology competition at the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference, held June 1-5 in Atlanta.

Six students from Georgia, Texas, Pennsylvania, Florida, South Dakota and Minnesota earned top honors in the competition, which included individual hands-on lab stations and a written exam. In total, 27 competitors from nearly 20 states competed in high school and college/postsecondary divisions.

“The industry collaboration by competing marine engine manufacturers that participated in SkillsUSA is incredible,” said Mark Reedenauer, NMEA president and executive director. “Seeing the looks on these competitors’ faces, some of them still kids, makes it all worth the marine industry’s effort to participate. ABYC should be commended for leading this charge and bringing other manufacturers to this great event.”

Dave Broadbent, ABYC senior director of business development, is the new technical committee chair for the Marine Service Technology category.

“This year’s national competition was the best since ABYC reengaged with SkillsUSA,” said Broadbent. “I can’t thank our partners enough for their support of such an important event for our industry. Showcasing marine service technology alongside other skilled trades is a great way to build awareness and grow our workforce. Next year will be even better.”

2026 SkillsUSA National Winners – Marine Service Technology

High School Division

Gold: James Reynolds, Hart County High School, Hartwell, Ga.

Silver: Garrett Reeves, Hollenstein Career and Technology Center, Fort Worth, Texas

Bronze: Cole Stefano, Bethlehem AVTS, Bethlehem, Pa.

College/Postsecondary Division

Gold: Colin Colbert, Pinellas Technical College — Clearwater, Clearwater, Fla.

Silver: Blaine Simantel, Mitchell Technical College, Mitchell, S.D.

Bronze: Aiden Bauch, Alexandria Technical & Community College, Alexandria, Minn.

The SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference recognizes the nation's top career and technical education students, with more than 7,000 participants competing in 115 contests across skilled trades, manufacturing, transportation, health care, hospitality and more.

For more information about the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference, visit nlsc.skillsusa.org. To learn more about ABYC's resources for schools looking to establish or enhance marine service programs, visit teachboats.org.

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Since 1954, the nonprofit American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) has developed safety standards for boat design, construction, equipage, repair and maintenance. The essential global source of marine industry technical information, ABYC's product safety standards, credentialing, education, training, and other tools help members make boating safer.