



News Release

from the PA Tourism & Lodging Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Columbia-Montour Area Vocational Technical School Students Place 1st in Pennsylvania

Four students from the Columbia-Montour Area Vocational Technical School's "Travel, Lodging, and Marketing Careers Program" recently placed first in the Pennsylvania Training for Lodging Careers Competition. This statewide competition was held from March 4 – 6, 2009 at the Nittany Lion Inn at Penn State University's Main Campus in State College, PA. The team from Columbia-Montour was made up of Samantha Dagostin, Emily Hartman, Kelly Strada and Jessica Whitenight. Their teacher is Donna Harris.

Students competed against other qualified high school teams in a variety of activities designed to test their skill-level and professionalism in the hospitality management field. In order to compete, all students and their schools must first comply with very strict educational program standards as dictated by the American Hotel & Lodging Association – Educational Institute (AHLA-EI) as well as the Pennsylvania Tourism & Lodging Association (PTLA). Executives from the PTLA office networked with the

students during the conference, as did key industry and educational leaders in hospitality from around the state.

Columbia-Montour's team won the Gold Medal for their Hospitality Project, which included extensive event planning activities and budgetary considerations. Columbia-Montour's team also won the Gold Medal for the Operations segment that ranged from night audit functions, food and beverage, and sales and marketing case studies, to housekeeping management tasks. The team won the Bronze Medal for their performance in the Knowledge Bowl. Their overall scores earned them the 1st Place Award for the Training for Lodging Careers Competition. In doing so, the students received partial scholarships to both Johnson & Wales University and Clemens College.

The state Competition was underwritten by the following businesses: Holiday Inn Harrisburg West, Penn State Hospitality Services, Ecolab, Guest Supply a Sysco Company, Hoteliers Ink, Premier Purchasing & Design, Holiday Inn Pittsburg Airport, Valley Forge Investment Group, Vitality, Southern Aluminum, Historic Hotel Gettysburg, W & L Sales Company, and E.Sam Jones Distributor, Inc.

The students will now advance to represent Pennsylvania against an international delegation of high schools that offer programs similar to Columbia-Montour's at the April 16 -18 International Lodging Management Program Competition scheduled in Orlando, FL. The Educational Institute, of the American Hotel & Lodging Association, produces this event.

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