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For Immediate Release

Thermoforming Machine Adds Real-World Experience to School Curriculum

*-Gettysburg High School students benefit from
Society of Plastics Engineers & McClarin Plastics’-*

Hanover, PA – In early 2008, Gettysburg High School’s Career and Technology Department began researching ways to expand their Material Processing Course. They’d hoped to include more experience with plastics via an industrial quality thermoforming machine – which was out of their budget and expertise. With the help of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE) and their Thermoforming Division Machinery Grant, this educational expansion became a reality. And, McClarin Plastics in Hanover, PA, further pledged assistance with the machine’s installation and acted as an on-going resource for training and troubleshooting.

The school received the machine in June 2008 and students began working with it at the start of the 2008-09 school year.

“Students want challenging work that is relevant to potential careers – this new machine provides another real-world avenue for them to explore,” said Larry R. Redding, Assistant Superintendent of the Gettysburg Area School District. “Our association with McClarin Plastics and the Society of Plastics Engineers provides technical guidance to our teachers as well as tying our curriculum into real-world expectations for our emerging workforce.”

Since the machine’s arrival, the students have designed and manufactured a flying disk mold and embossing top plate to brand the disk with *Gettysburg Warriors*. The project has given them experience beyond the actual thermoforming process. Students are learning about the integration of all of the skills necessary for a successful manufacturing process, skills such as designing using AutoCAD Inventor, problem solving, mold making, programming and operating Computer Numerical Control (CNC) equipment for part trim. They will also learn about sales and marketing as they plan to eventually sell the disks.

Students aren’t the only ones who benefit from the school-business relationship. According to Morrell Myers, Corporate Production Manager at McClarin, the program has spurred enthusiasm within their work force. “Working with the students has given us a fresh perspective,” said Myers. “It is also encouraging to know that if some of these students decide to work here [McClarin], they’ll be able to start at a higher level and bring more to the table at an earlier stage in their employment.”

The school received the thermoforming machine thanks to the SPE Thermoforming grant, federal funds from the Perkins Fund and a generous discount from Maac Machinery in Carol Stream, IL. McClarin personnel helped in the machine's set-up and training. McClarin continues its commitment to the school by providing their expertise to troubleshoot questions regarding the thermoforming process as well as providing molds and sheet plastic for the students use.

“Our ‘adopt-a-school’ philosophy is based on the fact that to be successful we all depend on each other: schools, students, and industry. We’ve seen our personnel and bottom line benefit from our involvement with the schools and we’ve seen a more prepared workforce come to our door,” said Todd Kennedy, President of McClarin Plastics. “All in all, it benefits everyone to stimulate the intelligence, imagination, and confidence of our students.”

About McClarin Plastics, Inc.

McClarin Plastics custom designs and manufactures Thermoformed and Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic products, components and assemblies. For over 50 years, they have helped local, national and international companies find creative solutions using plastics applications. For more information, call 1-800-233-3189 or visit www.mcclarinplastics.com.

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