Downtown Campus hosts
2012 Skills USA High School Welding Competition

[Narrator:] Pima Community College Downtown Campus hosted the 2012 Skills USA High School Welding Competition. Skills USA is a national competition preparing high school and college students for careers in technical trade, such as welding.

[Tad Streickland, Instructional Faculty Cholla High School, TUSD:] Skills USA is a partnership between secondary education, business industry and post-secondary education to promote workplace skills for our young adults. Tara High School operates with a dual enrollment agreement with Pima Community College where our intermediate welding students receive Pima Community College credit, during the second year of their program.

[Narrator:] PCC offers an Associate in Applied Science degree, in welding fabrication. Currently, there are 150 students enrolled in the program.

[Kenneth Bice, Instructional Faculty, Welding PCC Downtown Campus:] We offer an opportunity for them to get an American Welding Society Certification, American Society Mechanical and Engineer Certifications and the American Petroleum Institute Certifications. These are recognized nationally and a lot of them, even internationally. It’s the same way in the occupations, you go in there and you start at the bottom, you learn from master craftsmen that have been doing it for years and you eventually move up.

[Narrator:] For the competition, students receive contest drawings and welding instruction. They are required to weld five different joint designs, in multiple positions, using two different techniques in the arc welding process.

[Tad:] The welding industry has a shortage of certified welders now, in excess of 500,000. An entry level welder in Pima County will earn approximately $20,000 to $25,000 per year, as a starting wage. With specialized certifications after that the money is wide open. Some are as high as $60,000 per year within their fourth or fifth year working. The average wage of a manufacturer worker in Arizona is $72,000 per year now.

[Kenneth Bice:] Here in Tucson, well everybody knows right now the economy is a little bit slow, but a lot of our students are moving right into work, as soon as they get out. We cooperate largely with the industries in the area. A lot of them will donate material to us; steel, electrodes, other things that we need. A lot of them even donate some of the equipment that they don’t need anymore. Also, there are quite a few of them that sit on our advisory committee. We sit down twice a year with them and review the curriculum to make sure that we are covering with the students what they need to know to be employable when they leave the program.