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Governor McAuliffe Announces Winchester Metals to Invest \$140,000 to Upgrade Technology and Retrain Employees

~Package metals industry partner will retrain 29 employees to use robotic welding system~

RICHMOND – Governor Terry McAuliffe today announced that Winchester Metals, a complete package metals industry partner, has invested \$140,000 in new equipment at its manufacturing operation in Frederick County. Through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP), 29 existing employees will be retrained to operate the new machinery. The Lincoln Automate 35HS Robotic Welding System can be programmed to perform repetitive welding operations automatically, increasing efficiency in production and freeing the company’s experienced fabricators to perform more complex work.

“The success of our small businesses and the growth of the manufacturing industry are both at the heart of diversifying and building the new Virginia economy,” **said Governor McAuliffe**. “Advanced manufacturing is booming, and a growing sector demands new technology—which is why the ability to retrain employees is critical. When companies like Winchester Metals reinvest in the Commonwealth, the Virginia Jobs Investment Program helps provide the necessary training so that hard-working Virginians can continue to work and learn new skills. We are confident that having the capacity to adapt to changing technology will help ensure the company’s future success in Frederick County and the Commonwealth.”

“Small businesses like Winchester Metals are valuable employers for the Commonwealth and we are pleased that this company will benefit from Virginia’s jobs training program that ensures a skilled, marketable workforce,” **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Todd Haymore**. “Fabricated metal products manufacturing is the top sector for manufacturing firms in Virginia, with more than 700 companies on the roster. In an industry that is ever-changing and modernizing, worker retraining is an important tool – and key component of Virginia’s overall economic development platform – to keep jobs in the Commonwealth and secure Winchester Metals’ future longevity in Frederick County.”

Founded in 1975, Winchester Metals is a steel distribution, processing and fabrication facility servicing Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. The family-owned and operated company offers comprehensive processing, distribution and fabrication solutions to a variety of industrial, commercial, contracting and residential customers.

“We are committed to continuing to grow our business in Virginia and having a partner like the VEDP and its programs available for support makes it even more possible,” **said Josh Phelps, President of Winchester Metals**. “VJIP allows us to offset some of the costs associated with training our great employees to accommodate capital investments like this machine into our operations. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this program.”

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership will support Winchester Metal's jobs retraining through its Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP). VJIP provides consultative services and funding to companies creating new jobs or experiencing technological change to support employee training activities. As a business incentive supporting economic development, VJIP reduces the human resource costs of new and expanding companies. VJIP is state-funded, demonstrating Virginia's commitment to enhancing job opportunities for its citizens.

"Winchester Metals has been a staple of Frederick County's metal fabrication industry for more than three generations," **commented Charles S. DeHaven, Chairman of the Frederick County Board of Supervisors.** "This company exemplifies the grit and determination needed to succeed, having evolved its business over the years to incorporate new technologies and new ideas, while remaining steadfast in its commitment to building long-lasting relationships. The County is proud to have a company of Winchester Metals' caliber operating in our community, and we look forward to supporting them as they continue to build their legacy here."

"Staying on the cutting edge of technology is essential for Virginia's companies competing in the global marketplace," **added Senator Jill Vogel.** "This announcement by Winchester Metals demonstrates we can keep manufacturing jobs in Virginia with the right private investments alongside public policies. As technology advances, we must pay increasing attention to ensuring that small businesses like Winchester Metals are able to invest in cutting-edge equipment and access the skilled workforce critical to any advanced manufacturing enterprise. With this investment, we are confident a forward-looking company will keep dozens of Frederick County families well-employed for many years to come."

"It is very exciting to see this great company expanding their Winchester facility," **said Delegate David LaRock.** "I trust this investment will help keep Winchester Metals competitive while adding jobs and new business to our thriving local economy."

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