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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fairfield County Workforce Center Hosts Signing Day for 36 Grads

Carroll, OH: – The Fairfield County Workforce Center recently hosted its 7th annual Signing Day for Fairfield County high school graduates starting their careers with a local business. Thirty-six students and eight employers were honored at the event that brought to fruition efforts for Fairfield 33 Alliance's Career Readiness Program by connecting students graduating from local high schools to local businesses in need of employees.

Since 2019, the Workforce Center has taken the opportunity to shed light on students graduating with careers at local businesses. Their employment demonstrates the commitment from employers to hire local talent and invest in our youth and the community. The featured speakers for the event were Rick Szabrak, Director of Economic and Workforce Development for Fairfield County, Fairfield County Commissioner Dave Levacy, and Matt Claypool, President of Claypool Electric.

Matt Claypool, president of Claypool Electric Design and Construction, addressed the graduates, reiterating their decisions to enter the workforce at a time when skilled labor is not only needed, but will be in increased demand.

"Every single one of these trades is about to be in serious demand," he said. "Forty seven percent of skilled trades workers now outearn those with college degrees – and they do it without drowning in student loans. You'll get paid while you learn."

Commissioner Dave Levacy also addressed the students and their families.

"Parents, I know you are as proud as I am when you look around this room today," he said. "I am a small business owner and I can tell you I would not be anything without my skilled employees. They are the heart of any business."

"College signing days have long celebrated student-athletes taking the next step in their journey, and we believe students entering the workforce and skilled trades deserve that same recognition," said Rick Szabrak, Fairfield County Economic and Workforce Development Director. "These students have worked hard to build valuable skills and earn opportunities in high-demand career fields right here in our community. We're also proud to recognize the local employers who are investing in the next generation of talent through our pre-apprenticeship programs in electrical, HVAC, water and wastewater management, construction, manufacturing, plumbing, and phlebotomy."

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This year, graduating seniors are beginning careers at Fairfield Medical Center, TP Mechanical, Messer Construction, Fairfield Insulation and Drywall, Freeland Contracting, Gutridge Mechanical, Claypool Electric, and Accurate Heating and Cooling.

"This event highlights that there are many successful pathways available to students after high school," Szabrak said. "While college is the right choice for many, it's important for students and families to understand that skilled trades and workforce training can also lead to rewarding, high-demand careers without the burden of significant student debt. Across the country, nearly 40% of students who begin a four-year degree do not complete it within six years, which is why creating strong career pathways and connecting students directly with local employers is so important to the future of our workforce and our community."

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