

## CASTLE JOINS BUSINESS LEADERS TO HIGHLIGHT COMMUNITY COLLEGES AS A CRUCIAL COMPONENT TO AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS--May 20, 2008

Washington, D.C. -

Business Roundtable today connected business CEOs, Members of Congress, including Rep. Michael N. Castle (R-DE), and leaders of community colleges to focus on the critical role community colleges must play in enhancing American competitiveness. Their role from improving worker training to tapping and shaping the next generation of talent is even more imperative in today's fragile and competitive economy.

The roundtable discussion centered on Business Roundtable's initiative, AMERICA 21, that focuses on the policies needed to help U.S. workers better compete and succeed in the world economy. The discussion focused around an ambitious agenda to grow and strengthen the nation's 1,200 community colleges.

Rep. Castle, one of the co-chairs of the House Community College Caucus, established in the 109th Congress to raise awareness about the unique role these institutions play in the American educational system as well as provide a forum for Members to identify and discuss issues affecting community colleges, attended the event and highlighted the importance of strengthening our nation's community colleges.

"I believe today's topic of the untapped potential of community colleges to advance U.S. competitiveness is an important one," said Rep. Castle. "There are more than 11.6 million Americans enrolled in community colleges nationwide, and these institutions have proven to prepare students with the skills that are needed to succeed in today's economy. Through open-door admission, affordability, and community-based teaching, community colleges provide access to higher education for millions of Americans who might otherwise be excluded. By bringing government and business together to discuss these issues, we are gaining new perspectives. I am pleased with the results of today's roundtable and look forward to further discussing this issue in Congress."

William D. Green, Chairman & CEO of Accenture and chairman of Business Roundtable's Education, Innovation & the Workforce Initiative, also announced an Accenture pilot program that will place select Accenture executives in teaching roles and other educational activities at local community colleges. Over the next few months, Accenture will work with the colleges to structure this program, leveraging the skills and experience of Accenture executives to bring their real-world experience to benefit students.

"Business and government must work together to strengthen our nation's system of community and two-year colleges so that they can play an increasingly important role in enhancing America's workforce and competitiveness," said Mr. Green. "Business can provide genuine insight on what skills workers should be acquiring in order to meet today's changing economy. We are very excited about the program and hope that other companies will create and adopt similar programs as we continue to look for ways to help American workers acquire the knowledge, skills and support they need to move fluidly from job to job."

In addition to Accenture's commitment, Business Roundtable reaffirmed its call on Congress, entitled "Prospering Together: America's Citizens, Communities and Companies," which would immediately create a bipartisan National Commission on Workforce Competitiveness to develop the design and funding mechanisms for AMERICA 21.

Background:

Business Roundtable

([www.businessroundtable.org](http://www.businessroundtable.org)) is an association of chief executive officers of leading U.S. companies with \$4.5 trillion in annual revenues and nearly 10 million employees. Member companies comprise nearly one-third of the total value of the U.S. stock markets and represent over 40 percent of all corporate income taxes paid to the federal government. Collectively, they returned \$114 billion in dividends to shareholders and the economy in 2006.

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