FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 4, 2016

CONTACT:  Communication
334-242-9950
comm@alsde.edu

ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL CULINARY STUDENTS TO COMPETE AT STATE CULINARY CHAMPIONSHIP TO BE HELD MARCH 5

Montgomery, Ala. – Alabama’s top high school culinary arts students will compete in Birmingham at Culinard, the Culinary Institute of Virginia College, to earn top state awards and a possible spot in the upcoming 2016 Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) National Leadership Conference in San Diego, California. The event will be held Saturday, March 5, from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. with the awards ceremony from 2 to 3 p.m.

“The Alabama FCCLA Star Event competition is very similar to the hit television show Iron Chef America - it is full of action-packed competition,” says Judy Brown, Alabama Career and Technical Education (CTE) Specialist and Culinary Arts Coordinator. “This is an awesome event that exemplifies the professional culinary curriculum and workplace-readiness skills that support workforce development for Alabama’s Hospitality and Tourism Education programs. Today, Alabama has 56 hospitality and tourism high school programs with over 7,000 students enrolled.”

Every student team will develop a detailed food preparation plan and must have all dishes ready within a one-hour time frame. Current national statistical information indicates that the average salary for a certified “Executive Chef” exceeds more than $75,000 annually.

“Alabama’s high school students have the opportunity to expand their early knowledge of cooking in high school,” says Chef Antony Osborne, National Dean of Culinary and Hospitality Programs of Culinard. “This weekend, we have 17 top student teams competing to show those skills. This is a great opportunity for these students to further develop their lifelong career skills.”

Each team will be judged on planning (making time schedules, organizing the work area, obtaining needed supplies) and overall food production. Teams must successfully prepare the following menu from scratch within the one-hour timeframe in order to advance to the national competition:

- Garden Salad with Vinaigrette Dressing
- Classic Steak Diane
- Roasted Red Bliss Potatoes
- Green Beans and Mushrooms
- Classic French Crepes with Berries and Cream

Schools participating in this weekend’s state championship are: A. P. Brewer High School, Auburn High School, Boaz High School, Bob Jones High School, Calhoun County Career Technical Center, Central High School, Charles Henderson High School, Dothan Technology Center, Florence High School, Fort Payne High School, Holtville High School, Huntsville Center for Technology, Limestone County Career Technical Center, Russell County High School, Shelby County College and Career Center, S. S. Murphy High School, and Wenonah High School.

— more —
2016 Alabama Culinary Championship
March 5, 2016

What Will Happen During the Competition?

At the beginning of the competition, all teams receive the official menu and ingredients to complete the meals. Each team has exactly 30 minutes to organize its work areas, supplies, and time management plans. Teams have only 60 minutes to prepare the required dishes, which include a full main course and dessert. To complete this enormous task, students must be well organized and knowledgeable of proper food preparation techniques.

At the end of the one-hour contest period, participants then present their completed dishes to a panel of professional chefs and nationally recognized instructors. Every item is judged for appearance, taste, and temperature. During the competition, students are also judged on their work habits, personal appearance (uniforms and equipment), and overall creativity.

Students will have an opportunity to have their dishes critiqued by some of the top chefs in the Southeast. This year’s competition judges are:

- Chef Haskey M. Bryant – Jefferson County Department of Health
- Chef Matthew Dyer – Virginia College, Birmingham
- Chef Jessica Henry – MUW, Assistant Professor/Chef Instructor
- Chef Mary Grace Viado Howard – Corporate Executive Chef, The Village Tavern
- Chef Jason Knowlton - The Country Club of Birmingham
- Chef Jason Mullinex - Executive Chef at Honda in Lincoln
- Chef Clayton Sherrod - Chef Clayton’s Food Systems Inc.
- Chef Jane-Ellen Shumate -Virginia College, Birmingham

To see a copy of the full menu (Menu I) guidelines, visit: http://www.fcclainc.org/programs/documents/2015-2016CulinaryArtsMenusupdated2.26.16.pdf

FCCLA is a national organization devoted to preparing family and consumer sciences students for leadership and future career opportunities. Alabama has nearly 7,000 members who enjoy the many benefits this organization offers.

Since 2006, there has been over a 70 percent rate of growth in Alabama’s Hospitality and Tourism Cluster – Restaurant, Food and Beverages, Lodging and Recreation, and Travel and Tourism.

Top competition winners will earn college scholarships. As of today, more than $100,000 in scholarships will be provided to students competing in this year’s championship. This will be the largest amount of scholarships awarded in the history of this state competition.

Organizations that have partnered with the Alabama State Department of Education to host this event are SYSCO, Mercer, Pearson, ECOLAB, Alabama Cattlemen’s Association, Birmingham Originals and the Virginia College Culinard.

There are currently 48 Restaurant, Food and Beverages (K-12 culinary) programs in Alabama.

To learn more about this Alabama FCCLA competition, contact Alabama State Department of Education CTE Specialist and Culinary Arts Coordinator, Judy Brown, at (334) 242-9561.

###