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Ohio Leads Nation with Statewide Computer Literacy Program

COLUMBUS, OH – Ohioans can lead the nation in computer literacy and carry a card to prove it!

The International Computer Driving License (ICDL), provides a way for all Ohioans to obtain an internationally recognized certificate of achievement. Each person who earns the ICDL receives a card to certify they have the “license.”

ICDL is an international standard of definition and achievement for basic computer skills. While the program is currently offered in more than 130 countries worldwide, the program is relatively new in the United States. Ohio is the first to create a state-wide focus on basic computer literacy and the ICDL program. Information about the program is provided by Ohio Computing Unlimited, (www.ohiocomputingunlimited.org), a program of the Ohio IT Clearinghouse.

“The ICDL is in no way a real ‘license’ for computer users,” says Rich Bowers, coordinator of the Ohio IT Clearinghouse, an initiative of the Ohio Board of Regents and the Ohio Learning Network. “But it is a very good analogy – just as the automobile driver’s license indicates that one has the basic skills necessary to drive a car safely and responsibly – the ICDL indicates that one has proven a basic level of skill with computers and key applications.” It is important that Ohioans have a basic knowledge of computer skills because computers have become so essential to both school and work. The Ohio Board of Regents believes that computing skills, along with reading and math skills, are fundamental to success in higher education and the workplace. Numerous studies show that higher education is key to a renewed and more highly skilled workforce across the state.

“We have a reasonable definition of the ‘basic computing skill set’ with this program which enables learners, educators and employers alike to share a common understanding and expectation,” said Bowers. “The ICDL program can be used as a guide to know where you are in your knowledge and skill, and what you might be missing. Employers

will want to reward their employees' efforts to enhance their computer skills by obtaining the necessary education and acquiring the certificate.”

Raising the awareness of employers about the benefits of employees and job candidates having such a certification is a priority of the OCU. Employers should see this program as an effective way to save time and effort in evaluating job candidates and for providing basic computer training for new employees.

Ohioans can earn the 'drivers license' locally. OCU is partnering initially with the EnterpriseOhio Network and the SkillsMAX centers to provide local testing centers. The EnterpriseOhio Network supports the training and community activities of 53 Ohio community colleges and satellite campuses. The SkillsMAX Centers are specially-outfitted testing centers – and most of the 20 campuses in that network are the initial testing centers for those pursuing an ICDL certificate. Community technology centers around the state – such as the ACCEL program in Zanesville – and other organizations that reach out to specialized audiences are expected to be involved in the initiative. For a center close to you visit www.ohiocomputingunlimited.org.

The Ohio Learning Network (www.olin.org), is a consortium of 72 colleges and universities helping Ohioans learn more to earn more and improving teaching and learning with technology.

Ohio Computing Unlimited, the Ohio IT Clearinghouse, and OLN are programs of the Ohio Board of Regents. For more information, visit the Ohio Computing Unlimited website (www.ohiocomputingunlimited.org), or send e-mail to ohio-icdl@olin.org.