

# WORKFORCE CENTRAL FLORIDA Sponsors Green Building Workshop and Job Shadow For Middle School Students

**ORLANDO, Fla.** ... – One hundred middle school students from Orange and Lake counties recently participated in an educational job shadowing event at Headquarter Honda sponsored by WORKFORCE CENTRAL FLORIDA and Junior Achievement of Central Florida.

The 48,000-square-foot Honda dealership is the first commercial building in the state to earn the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) highest ranking: platinum certification for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). According to the USGBC, fewer than six percent, or just 400 buildings of roughly 7,000 LEED projects worldwide, have achieved platinum status.

On June 1, 100 students from Robinswood and Meadowbrook middle schools (Orange County) and Gray Middle School (Lake County) participated in a workshop sponsored by WORKFORCE CENTRAL FLORIDA and coordinated by Junior Achievement that was designed to stimulate interest in science, technology, engineering and math education. The students experienced work stations focused on solar energy, water conservation, hybrid cars and an overview of the LEED building certification process.

"These kids were sharp," said Alex Esteve, director of marketing for Headquarter Honda. "They asked great questions, and had great ideas. One student told me he noticed it was windy on our roof top, and asked why we didn't put wind turbines up there to go along with our solar panels!"

"Headquarter Honda's facility is a terrific resource for educating stu-

dents about career opportunities in alternative energy sectors and provides a platform for WORKFORCE CENTRAL FLORIDA to show students the education they need to pursue training in new and emerging industries," said Gary Earl, CEO of for the nonprofit organization, which prepares residents for careers that meet local industry's needs today and in the future.

"This facility at Headquarter Honda, and the event, exceeded our expectations," said Frank Podeswa, director of college programs for Junior Achievement of Central Florida. "You almost lose sight of the fact that they sell cars. It was an eye-opening experience for the kids, and you could see they retained a lot because they brought up the surprising things they'd learned today during our wrap-up session."

The energy efficiency at Headquarter Honda springs from design and construction utilizing state-of-the-art green building techniques and materials. The dealership generates 12.5 percent of its electricity via 8,500 square feet of solar panels on its roof, which also features a system of grass and other plants to insulate the building. "Smart" lighting systems turn the lights off in unoccupied rooms and 75 percent of regularly occupied areas are illuminated by daylight, rather than electricity.

In addition to using automatic faucets and low-flush toilets, Headquarter Honda collects rainwater in two 10,000- and 12,000-gallon underground tanks, recycles all water used in car washing and uses reclaimed water for 100 percent of its landscaping irrigation.

WORKFORCE CENTRAL FLORIDA chose to sponsor this event to raise awareness about careers in STEM with an emphasis on alternative, renewable and sustainable energy.

WORKFORCE CENTRAL FLORIDA is the region's workforce expert, helping over 4,000 employers connect with more than 47,000 job seekers. WCF offers innovative solutions to assist Central Florida businesses succeed in today's highly competitive workforce, while providing the tools job seekers need to find or advance in their current career.

Headquarter Honda is located at 17700 State Road 50 in Clermont, just west of the Florida Turnpike Exit 272. For more information, please visit [www.HeadquarterHonda.com](http://www.HeadquarterHonda.com). For more information on LEED certification, please visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).