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HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS OPENS NEW DISTRIBUTION CENTER IN JOLIET

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1.6 Million Square Foot, State-of-the-Art Facility to Bring 800 New Jobs to Area

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Opening Ceremonies Include Harbor Freight Tools Foundation LLC Grant of \$100,000 to Joliet Township High School District #204; \$10,000 in Gift Cards from the Company to Outfit Trades Classrooms in Joliet Central and West High Schools

(Joliet, IL; June 9, 2022) Harbor Freight Tools today opened a new distribution center in Joliet, Illinois, which is expected to bring 800 new jobs to the area.

The 1.6 million square-foot facility will allow the retailer to efficiently deliver products to more than 300 stores in 16 states in the Midwest. Harbor Freight Tools is one of the nation's fastest growing retailers, opening several new stores a week. In the last 12 months, the company has opened 132 new stores in the U.S. and expects to open about 100 more by the end of this year.

"The new distribution center in Joliet is a game-changer for Harbor Freight Tools. It will be much easier to stock our Midwest stores and to get our customers the tools they need," said Mark Calloway, divisional vice president and general manager of the new facility. "The new distribution center will reduce the company's carbon footprint by eliminating the need to transport products to the region from either coast."

Previously the 300 Midwest stores were served by two faraway distribution centers in California and South Carolina. The new state-of-the-art center contains the latest technology, including automatic storage and retrieval and robotic operations. Hiring is underway for the site, with approximately 800 jobs with competitive wages and benefits expected to be added over the next 18 months. On June 29, the company will be holding a job fair for applicants at the Clarion Hotel in Crest Hill (411 S. Larkin Avenue) from 10 am to 1 pm and 3 pm to 7pm. Open positions include Warehouse Associates, Equipment Operators, Warehouse Operations Associates, and Facilities Technicians. Applicants can also apply online at www.harborfreightjobs.com.

Harbor Freight Tools has a long history in Illinois, opening its first store in the state 20 years ago in nearby Aurora. The company now has 38 stores in Illinois, with four more slated to open in the next year.

“The company is grateful for our terrific Joliet partners, including the local contractors and crews who built this remarkable facility despite all the recent challenges. While Harbor Freight operates nationwide, we pride ourselves on being a local business, and giving back to the communities we serve is one of our core principles,” said Calloway. “We couldn’t have achieved this milestone without the invaluable involvement of the Joliet and Will County officials.”

In recognition of the importance of public high school trades education for the country’s future, and the career pathways being developed in the Joliet community, the Harbor Freight Tools Foundation, LLC provided a \$100,000 grant to the Joliet Township High School District #204. Harbor Freight Tools Foundation, LLC is a subsidiary of The Smidt Foundation, a private foundation established by Eric Smidt in 2016 to support programs and organizations dedicated to creating economic opportunity and advancing justice, equality, and safety for all. In addition, the company itself is donating \$10,000 in gift cards to help update and furnish trades classroom spaces at two local high schools, Joliet Central High School and Joliet West High School, as well as a Full Bank Tool Cart in the school’s colors to each school.

The grants were presented at an official ribbon cutting ceremony attended by Joliet Mayor Bob O’Dekirk, Will County Executives Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant and Doug Pryor, President, Will County Center for Economic Development as well as officials from the Joliet Township High School District and Harbor Freight Tools.

About Harbor Freight Tools

For 45 years, Harbor Freight Tools has been America’s go-to source for affordable quality tools. The family-owned company started in Southern California in 1977, when 17-year-old Eric Smidt began transforming his father’s small phone sales business into a successful mail order company, bypassing the resellers, dealing directly with factories, and passing the savings on to the customer. Today more than 40 million customers depend on Harbor Freight’s quality and value to earn a living, repair their homes and cars and pursue their hobbies.

The company opened its first store in 1980. Harbor Freight Tools is one of the nation’s fastest growing retailers, with more than 1300 stores across the country and opening two new stores every week. With 25,000 Associates, the company was recently recognized for the second year in a row by *Forbes* as both one of the 20 best large companies to work for in retail and the nation’s Number One Employer for Veterans in its category. *Forbes* has also recognized Harbor Freight Tools as one of 20 best large companies for women to work for in retail and one of the best large companies for diversity. The company has also been recognized as one of the country’s top employers in terms of diversity and inclusion by DiversityJobs.com.

With core values of excellence and continuous improvement, Harbor Freight Tools works to constantly improve the quality of its products and this year will introduce more than 800 new tools and accessories. Harbor Freight Tools locations are open 7 days a week, Mondays through Saturdays from 8 am to 8 pm and on Sundays from 9 am to 6 pm.

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