**President Obama Delivers Speech on Economy at Lawson State Community College**

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama (March 26, 2015) – President Barack Obama made a recent trip to Alabama, one of a few during his presidency, and selected Lawson State Community College as the site for his presentation on the economy.

He greeted the crowd, "Hello Alabama. Hello Lawson State....Let me just say, first of all, thank you to Dr. Ward - who is not only your president, we named him a White House "Champion of Change" for the very work he's done here at Lawson State."

Before a cheering audience of approximately 2100 students, faculty, staff and invited guests, President Obama touted his main message on the budget, middle-class economics and the hazards of payday loans and title loans.

Addressing a component of what middle-class economics means in this economy, the President said, "It means preparing Americans to earn good jobs and higher wages, which means every child getting a great education at the earliest age. Making college more affordable so young people can afford to go to college without getting burdened with debt."

His remarks also met with great applause as he further addressed the economy and education. "It means working with businesses to provide apprenticeships and on-the-job training and other paths into the middle class. And I want to bring down the cost of community college to zero,” he said. ”Two years of community college should be as free and universal as high school is today. If we've got the best-trained workforce in the world, then businesses will come to Alabama. They'll come to Birmingham. They'll come to America. And we will succeed."

“I can truly say that we were honored, elated and humbled by the fact that President Obama chose to come to Lawson State Community College to make his presentation today,” said Dr. Perry W. Ward, president of Lawson State. “To be ranked as the fifth best community college in the nation by the Washington Monthly in 2013, to be honored as a Champion of Change by the White House, to have recently received a $10 million Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant for workforce development and now to receive a visit from the President of the United States of America addresses the contributions and impact that Lawson State has made.”

Dr. Ward was also one of a select few invited by President Obama to be a participant in the ‘President’s Roundtable’ discussion on financial literacy that preceded his speech.