

## **CMT TO PARTNER WITH BRIDGEVALLEY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE IN “CMT EMPOWERING EDUCATION” CAMPAIGN**

**SOUTH CHARLESTON, WV** – October 15, 2015– There are 5.8 million jobs open right now in the United States, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, many of which remain unfilled due to a lack of skilled applicants. CMT is teaming up with BridgeValley to encourage area residents to go back to school as part of the cable network’s [CMT Empowering Education](#) initiative. The campaign highlights the important role community colleges play in providing affordable, relevant education and training aligned with the workforce needs in rural America.

“Although the number of available jobs is on the rise nationally, many go unfilled to the lack of applicants with the necessary skills or credentials, Rural areas are among those which struggle the most,” said Lucia Folk, vice president of public affairs, CMT. “Through this initiative, we’re working in smaller communities to highlight the available tools and resources to earn degrees and certificates. In less than two years we’ve nearly doubled our reach, but there’s still much more to do.”

The partnership with BridgeValley is the result of an expansion throughout Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Oregon and Texas, bringing the total reach of the program to 25 colleges across 17 states. CMT first announced the community college initiative in 2014 at the Clinton Global Initiative-America meeting. Working in collaboration with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), CMT Empowering Education experienced early success as the 10 pilot partner schools hosted local events, bringing star-power and helping to put a face on education by highlighting success stories of students. Prospective students learned about solutions to some of the biggest obstacles they face, including financial aid and part time programs.

CMT Empowering Education first launched in 2012 to encourage viewers, no matter their age, to enroll or re-enroll in school to reach their full potential. [CMTEMPOWERINGEDUCATION.com](#) offers crucial information and resources for prospective students, including tips for how to finance their education, a timeline for applying to school and access to a multitude of scholarship resources. By answering a few simple questions, users receive a customized action plan for completing school in a way that fits their individual needs and lifestyle.

For more information on CMT Empowering Education, visit [CMT.com](#), follow [@CMTempoweringEd](#) on Twitter or on [Facebook](#).

**[www.cmtpress.com](http://www.cmtpress.com)**

**About CMT EMPOWERING EDUCATION:**

CMT Empowering Education is a comprehensive educational campaign that provides both an online resource, [www.CMTEmpoweringEducation.com](http://www.CMTEmpoweringEducation.com), and on the ground support to aid prospective students in overcoming the most commonly perceived obstacles to furthering education. The initiative is founded on education research and insights through a partnership between Viacom and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Advising partners for the CMT Empowering Education campaign include Achieving the Dream, the Association of Career and Technical Education, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Center for Workforce and Economic Development at the American Association of Community Colleges, the National Skills Coalition and Skills for America's Future (the Aspen Institute).

**[www.cmtpress.com](http://www.cmtpress.com)**

CMT, a unit of Viacom Inc. (NASDAQ: VIA, VIAB), is the leading television and digital authority on country music and entertainment, reaching more than 92 million homes in the U.S. CMT, [CMT.com](http://CMT.com) and [CMT Radio](http://CMT Radio) offer an unparalleled mix of music, news, live concerts and series and are the top resource for country music on demand. The network's digital platforms include the 24-hour music channel, CMT Pure Country, CMT App, CMT Mobile and CMT VOD.

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