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Contact: Kat Espinosa, 904-398-9944, kat@janfl.org

**Transportation Institute Commits to Signature Maritime Industry
Storefront at JA BizTown® in Jacksonville**

*Partnership will introduce students to a vital regional industry and help launch a streamlined
pathway from career awareness to opportunity*

JACKSONVILLE, FL (October 13, 2026) Junior Achievement of North Florida (JANFL) today announced that the Transportation Institute has committed to a Signature Maritime Industry Storefront in JA BizTown®, part of the new Junior Achievement Experiential Learning Center planned for downtown Jacksonville. The storefront will give students an early, hands-on introduction to maritime and logistics careers that are central to Northeast Florida's economy.

The commitment marks an important first step in JANFL's broader vision for a maritime career pathway. Beginning with industry awareness in JA BizTown®, that vision would give students opportunities to explore maritime careers more deeply as they grow older and connect their interests to education, training, credentials and employment.

"Jacksonville is a maritime city, but many young people don't know how many different careers make that industry possible or how they could find their own place in it," said Shannon Italia, president of Junior Achievement of North Florida. "The Transportation Institute is helping us change that. Its storefront will give students a real introduction to the industry and create a starting point for the more connected career pathway we envision."

The need for that connection is significant. According to a study conducted by Martin Associates in 2024, cargo activity through Jacksonville's seaport supports more than 258,800 jobs and generates approximately \$44 billion in annual economic impact across Florida. Closer to home, more than 30,700 jobs in the Jacksonville region are connected to the maritime industry, underscoring its importance to Northeast Florida's economy. Yet many students and families remain unaware of the diverse opportunities available within the sector, highlighting the need to connect classroom learning to career opportunity.

In JA BizTown®, middle school students prepare in the classroom before visiting a simulated town, where they take on workplace roles and make decisions as employees, consumers and citizens. The Maritime Industry storefront will bring the work of this regional industry into that experience, helping students understand how maritime businesses operate, the skills their workers use and the many people involved in moving goods.

"The maritime industry touches nearly every part of American life, yet too few students are aware of the opportunities it offers. Through our partnership with Junior Achievement of North Florida, thousands of young people will gain exposure to the careers, skills, and possibilities within the maritime sector. Companies like Crowley and TOTE Maritime are major employers in the North Florida region, and it's important to highlight those career paths. Creating that awareness at scale is essential to helping students access meaningful careers with long-term growth and economic mobility, while building a stronger, more sustainable maritime workforce for generations to come." -Sara Fuentes, President, Transportation Institute

The Transportation Institute works to preserve and strengthen the American maritime industry and to support a strong U.S.-flag merchant marine. Working closely with the Transportation Institute, Crowley, a Jacksonville-based maritime, energy and logistics solutions company, will serve as a maritime provider within the transportation storefront, introducing students to maritime-specific careers and the skills and pathways that support them.

"Maritime offers rewarding careers across operations, technology, engineering, logistics and many other fields, and the storefront gives students a first-hand look at the career opportunities and positive impact of the industry," said Jen Leonard, chief people officer at Crowley. "By bringing the industry into JA BizTown®, we can help young people understand the

range of possibilities, connect their interests and strengths to real career paths, and begin imagining a future for themselves in maritime.”

The planned Experiential Learning Center will bring JA BizTown® and JA Finance Park® together at Florida State College at Jacksonville’s Downtown Campus, with a goal of serving more than 30,000 students annually. Across its learning experiences, JANFL aims to connect what students learn in school with the skills, employers and pathways that can shape their futures.

“Career awareness is most powerful when it leads somewhere,” Italia said. “Our goal is for a student’s first encounter with an industry like maritime to become the beginning of a journey - one that helps them discover their strengths, understand their options and take the next step toward a career with room to grow. That is good for young people, good for business and good for Northeast Florida.”

To learn more about the Experiential Learning Center, visit janflelc.org.

About Junior Achievement of North Florida

Junior Achievement of North Florida is dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in a global economy. Through hands-on learning experiences focused on financial literacy, career readiness and entrepreneurship, Junior Achievement helps students build financial capability, explore career pathways and develop the skills and confidence needed to pursue economic opportunity. With the support of educators, volunteers and community partners, Junior Achievement of North Florida provides students with experiences designed to prepare them for success in work and life.

About the Transportation Institute

The Transportation Institute (TI) was established in 1967 as a non-profit organization dedicated to maritime research, education and promotion. The Institute participates in all phases of the nation’s deep-sea, foreign and domestic shipping trades, and barge and tugboat operations on the Great Lakes and on the vast network of America’s inland waterways. Many member company vessels are contracted to the U.S. military services. All are of U.S. registry - crewed by American citizens operating under the world’s highest safety standards and proudly flying the American flag. With offices on the East and West coasts, the Transportation Institute supports a wide range of programs that promote the strength of America’s capability.