

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

## Share Your Skills by Getting Involved



*Students like these look forward to competing in their local Skills Challenge each fall. AGC Georgia and our host contractors from each of the seven events are asking for volunteers to serve as judges. We also need companies to host interactive displays to help educate the student observers at each event about careers in construction.*

**O**ur Skills Challenge series is arguably the most significant workforce development initiative AGC Georgia and our regional champion contractors undertake every year.

In 2019, more than 80 high schools competed and nearly 1,750 students were engaged. This fall we are adding two new locations to increase to seven regional

events across the state.

We are working with high school construction teachers to make plans to host their talented students for the upcoming Skills Challenge series this fall. To make the regional events an exceptional experience, we are asking for contractors around Georgia to get involved.

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## Beauty & The Beast (of a Truck)

It's not everyday that a beauty pageant contestant also drives a cement mixer, but Whitney Erving is not your typical individual.

As a cement mixer truck driver for AGC Georgia member Southeast Ready Mix, Whitney recently competed in the Miss Georgia pageant. She shares with us how she got started in both the construction and pageant worlds, the similarities between the two and how her mother helped influence both.

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# Revived Harris County High School Construction Program Earns National Certification

**H**arris County High School restarted its construction program three years ago under the guidance of HCHS construction teacher Jim Steel. In that short period of time, the program has already earned the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) certification.

After not being offered for eight years, the HCHS construction program was able to achieve the national certification despite the additional challenges of a pandemic. The three-year CTAE program equips students with the tools to learn

the fundamentals of safety and employability in carpentry, electrical and agriculture. Upon graduation, students receive an OSHA 10-Hour card that allows industry employers to know that the students received a relevant education and are workforce ready.

In addition, Steel received a CTAE Industry Certification for preparing students to work in the industry right out of school.

"It's a great feeling to equip students with the knowledge and skills that will help them throughout their life," said Steel. "Everybody hopes to own a house at some point. It will be a wonderful sense of accomplishment when something breaks and you can confidently repair the problem on your own."

In addition to the top-level industry education, students also compete in state-wide competitions through the school year.



## Harris County Construction Students Qualify For State Finals

Students representing Harris County High School's (HCHS) Construction program qualified for the state championships by placing at the Skills Challenges event hosted by an AGC Georgia Workforce

Development Alliance. For the 2020-2021 academic year, HCHS finished the regional competitions with four first-place wins and a third-place finish.



# HS Program Offers OSHA 10-Hour Course

Jackson High School construction teacher Ben Lowe didn't let virtual school slow his students down from gaining valuable OSHA certification. Lowe worked with CEEGA and CareerSafe to secure OSHA 10-Hour codes to allow all of his students who wanted to earn the certificate to do so.

During the first semester, Jackson High School went completely virtual for two weeks, which was the perfect amount of time for students to work on the required tasks. During the second semester, Lowe assigned codes to all his virtual students, while those who were in-person were given class time to work on the program over the

course of a few weeks.

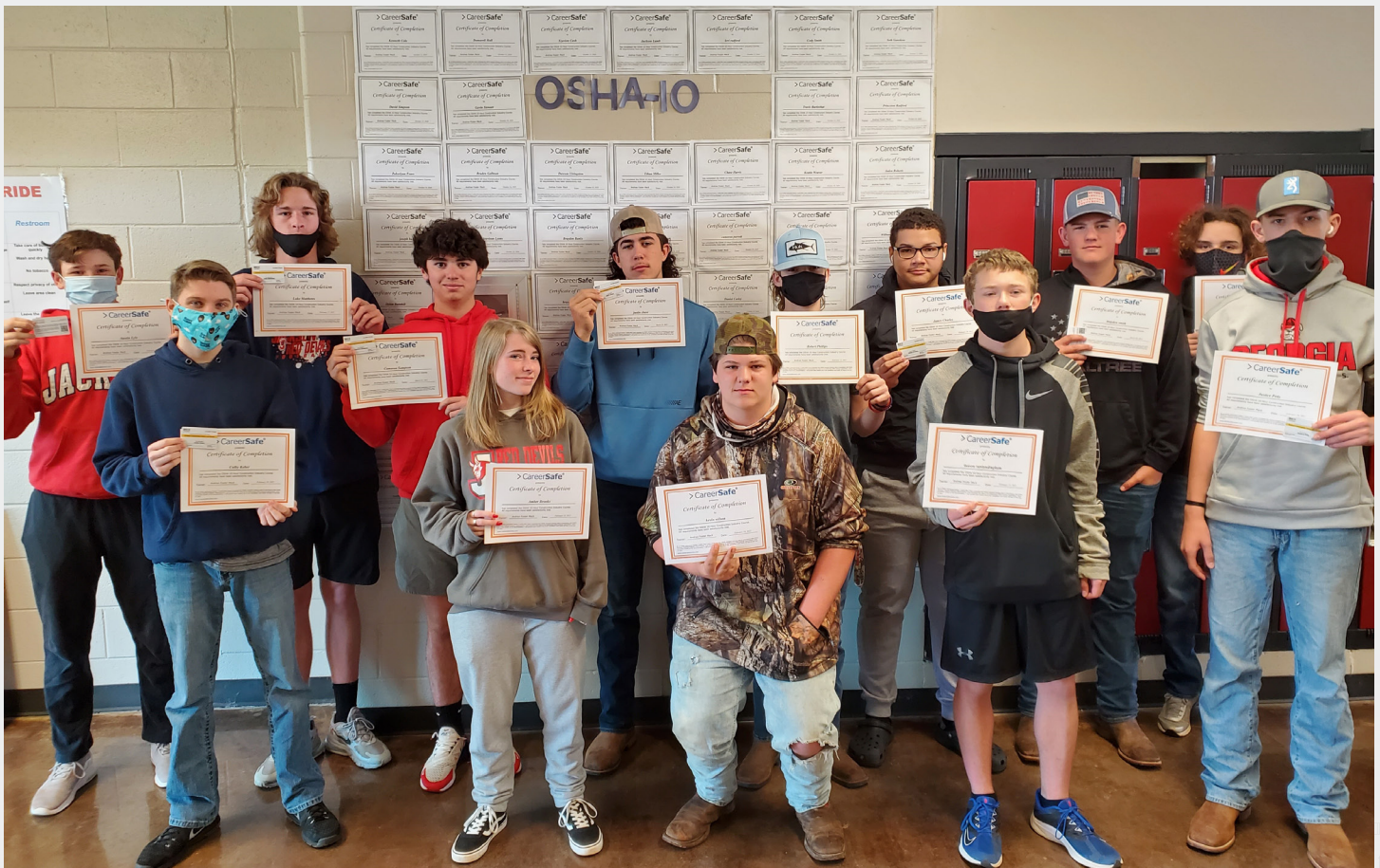
"I created an OSHA 10-Hour wall in the classroom where I posted everyone's certificate," said Lowe. "The wall motivated my students since they wanted to complete the program and have their certificate on the wall for everyone to see."

The program and Lowe's inspiration has been a success to date. The school has already had 62 students receive the OSHA 10-Hour construction safety

certification, which has really helped jump start the program. Lowe's goal is to have all his first level students certified in the future.

"When my students leave high school, I want to make sure they are in a solid position with their highly recognized, highly sought after, national OSHA certification," said Lowe. "This will give them a leg up in the industry."

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# Berkmar High School's Hiring Day

In March, students enrolled in the Berkmar High School construction program participated in the 2nd Annual Hiring Day.

With guidance from the program's instructor, Patrick Mahaffey, students interviewed with multiple employers in hopes of securing full-time jobs and work-based learning opportunities.

## FULL-TIME JOBS

- 5 seniors for electrical positions
- 4 seniors for carpentry positions
- 1 senior for drywall
- 1 senior for HVAC

## WORK-BASED LEARNING

- 5 juniors received summer opportunities

Partners in the Hiring Day included AGC Georgia members Carroll Daniel Construction, Eckardt Group, Marek, MetroPower, and Tebarco Mechanical Corporation.

AGC Georgia is working with our workforce partner, the Construction Education Foundation of Georgia (CEFGA), to coordinate more hiring events at high school's around Georgia. If you would like to get more involved and learn how to reach young people for job opportunities, please connect with Bill Chambless at [chambless@agcga.org](mailto:chambless@agcga.org) or 478-972-5865.

*The program has been fulfilling. Many people worry about their future after high school, but I don't because I'm guaranteed a successful career in the trades. So, while other people are still studying in college, I will already be many steps ahead of them.*

– Jovan Selvera (Junior)

*The construction and architecture academy has been a great experience for me for several reasons. I've learned many things like the architecture scale, how to properly read and utilize the measuring tape for building projects. I've also learned how to safely use different types of equipment. This program has opened doors for our class by giving us the opportunity to have interviews with companies in occupations we enjoy, allowing us to have experience and knowledge for future jobs.*

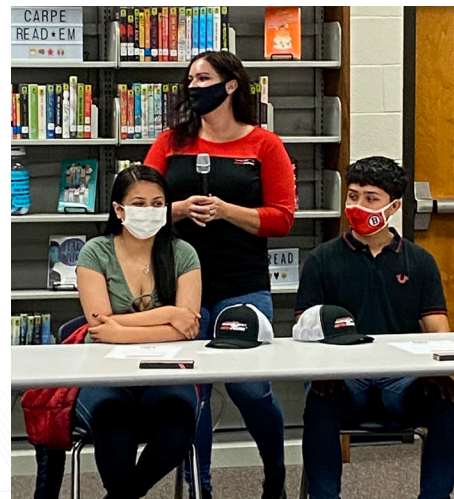
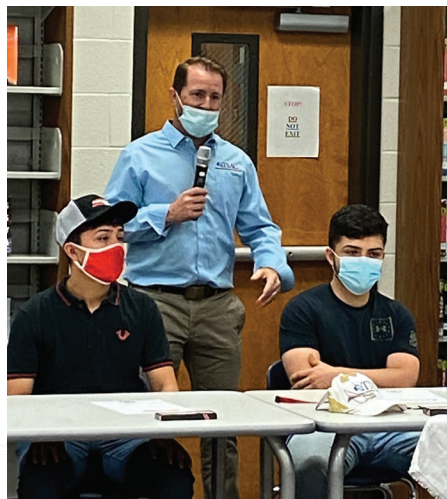
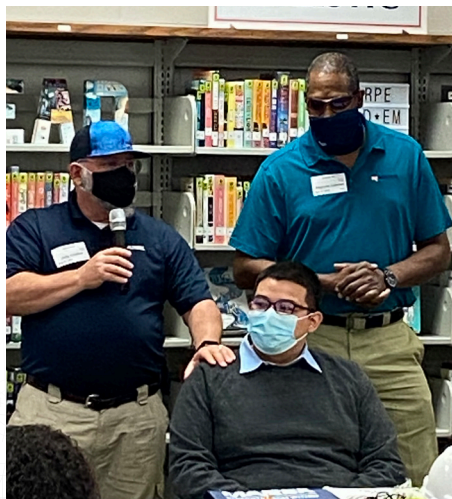
– Yessica Rios (Junior)

*"Believe you can and you're halfway there" – Theodore Roosevelt...This quote inspires me as a woman in a male-dominated industry. I have worked very hard to get where I am right now. Without this program, I would still not know what I want to do with my life. In the beginning, I didn't think this program would ever be part of a career I would choose. Mr. Mahaffey has been a great and supportive teacher who has helped me excel not only in my classes but in life. The construction program at Berkmar has provided me with many opportunities and has opened many doors for me. I wouldn't be where I am today if I didn't believe in myself. I'm halfway there, and I will continue to excel.*

– Angela Rodriguez (Senior)

*This program means a lot to me. It has changed my life in a big way. I DON'T know where I would be without it. It has taught me respect, integrity, responsibility, and how to problem solve. It has honestly been one of the most inspirational programs I have ever been in, and I would recommend it to everyone.*

– Jean Fransico (Senior)





# It Begins with a Toolbox

**A**GC Georgia's Young Leadership Program (YLP) is known for camaraderie amongst its members, along with a little friendly competition. It's inspiring that their competitive nature translates to YLP's community service projects.



In the midst of a pandemic, the Toolbox program developer and founding volunteer Jeffrey "J" Prothero had to pivot. He partnered with YLP to help fifth-grade students 'discover who they are when they work with their hands,' even while working from home and being educated online. The program seeks to inspire fifth graders throughout the state to consider a construction trade.

"The YLP members were honored to observe the excellence of construction demonstrated by the students," said YLP Council Chair and Collins & Arnold Construction Company Estimator Brian Cunningham. "The creativity and craftsmanship have far exceeded expectations thus far."

The YLP members all remember their first tool box and know that moment of pride and ownership first-hand. Prothero developed a program pilot for 54 schools in Fulton County where Toolbox volunteers cut and prepared the kits for students to make their own toolboxes. Then, the students would assemble their own toolboxes made of plywood. The students learned these skills from the Toolbox volunteers and instructors, as well as through a video library of instruction filmed by J with funds provided by CEFGA and Home Depot. Here is the link for context [toolbox.life/library](http://toolbox.life/library).

Once the schools shifted to online due to the pandemic, the team scrambled to find ways to continue inspiring students from a distance. The Toolbox management team moved quickly to create a digital version of the Toolbox program.

"Students were able to pick up their toolbox kit from their schools, masked and social distanced,"

said Cunningham. "Toolbox volunteers and instructors encouraged the kids to attend online classes with their Toolbox kits and supported them as they learned how to assemble their toolboxes."

Prothero developed the training videos for the students and their construction 'buddies' (typically their parents). In April, the students visited their school parking lots to have their Tool Box instructors inspect them.

"We want to thank CEFGA and The Home Depot for serving as our main benefactors," said Prothero. "This program would not have been possible without them." To learn more about Toolbox, please visit [www.toolbox.life](http://www.toolbox.life).

**YLP Council Chairman Brian Cunningham shared that when he was hired by Collins & Arnold Construction President Jenny Horton he was told, "You will be involved with YLP. You will always say yes to YLP and AGC Georgia, and I am so glad she did."**

## Share Your Skills

### CONTINUED FROM COVER

CONSIDER SOME OF THESE OPTIONS:

- Volunteer to serve as a judge
- Offer hands-on activities and career path advice for students by hosting an exhibit table
- Donate materials needed to host competitions
- Provide financial support as a sponsor
- Help set up the competition areas the day before the event
- Talk to your local construction teacher and if they haven't participated in the past, share this information so they can sign up their students
- Educate your local school board members,



principals and CTAE directors on the importance of credentialed construction curriculum being taught in public schools

- Invite academic stakeholders such as middle and high school counselors, and Work-Based Learning Coordinators to a Skills Challenge as your guest.

Georgia's construction industry is thriving. Now more than ever, we need all industry professionals to help us continue attracting future workforce in our effort to create a sustainable pipeline of talent. Sitting by and doing nothing is not the answer. Jump in and get involved – we promise you will love the experience.

### Make plans to get involved at one or more of the 2021 Skills Challenges:

Gainesville: October 27  
Macon: October 28  
Cedartown: November 1  
Savannah: November 2  
Moultrie: November 9  
Metro Atlanta: November 16  
Augusta: November 18

To learn about an individual event and how to get involved, please connect with Bill Chambliss at [chambliss@agcga.org](mailto:chambliss@agcga.org) or 478-972-5865.

# Beauty & The Beast

CONTINUED FROM COVER

**Q:** How and when did you decide to go into the construction industry?

**A:** I went into the construction industry because my mom (Tanya Erving, Plant Manager for the Southeast Ready Mix location in Bluffton, SC) would show me things at work on her down time. Watching my mom operating a loader, it seemed pretty daring and it inspired me to want to be able to do that someday.

**Q:** What skills are needed to succeed at your job?

**A:** I wouldn't say anyone needs certain skills, but it's important to have a good work ethic and determination along with the sheer desire to step into what is known as a male-dominated trade to make a reasonable wage.

**Q:** When did you begin participating/showing interest in pageants?

**A:** I never really saw myself dressing up until I started watching *The Bachelorette* (TV series on ABC) in 2019. The women would always dress so fancy. Plus, my mother would always tell me to try different things and put myself out there.

**Q:** What was your experience getting involved in the Miss Georgia pageant?

**A:** Everything about the experience was crazy since it was my very first time! I really didn't know what to expect. I can say that while competing, you meet so many different women from such different backgrounds. It's amazing to hear where people come from and to all be on the same stage for a state title.

**Q:** Did your work ethic and values learned from Southeast Ready Mix help during the pageant?

**A:** Working at Southeast benefited me when it came to understanding what I want to do with my life. From working long, dirty nights, I want to see what else I can accomplish. I've mastered some equipment in a man's field; let's see about the pageant stage.

**Q:** What similarities are there between the job and the pageant?

**A:** There's a big one that stands out. As a woman on

a construction site, all eyes are on you. Everyone sees it's a woman out here. Sometimes I feel like a few of the guys are waiting for me to mess up. It was a similar feeling with pageants. They would say, "She's a truck driver, she doesn't know anything about pageants." That is true, but I do now! Both arenas are competitive and require you to stay focused.

**Q:** How do you hope to inspire other young women?

**A:** I want give women hope and courage and inspire them to do things that give them a thrill. I want to encourage them to do whatever they want in life regardless of what that dream is. Maybe for some it's going to school to teach and for others it's learning to work equipment. I hope all women with try new things even if they are scared.

**Q:** What advice would you give young women who are interested in truck driving?

**A:** I work long hours and have to clean and inspect the vehicle when I'm done. You have to be able to

move quickly and think before you act. As a truck driver, you must put safety first.

**Q:** What advice would you give young women who are interested in pageants?

**A:** Participating in a pageant isn't for the weak! You have to be okay with people telling you No more than you hear Yes. If you don't make it this year, watch the tapes and learn from your mistakes. Listen to what people have to say when they see you on stage. Constructive criticism always helps.

**Q:** As a Miss Georgia contestant, what do you hope other young women learn from you?

**A:** I have been in the deep end and sometimes you aren't quite ready and need to come back toward the shallow end. It's important to take experiences at your own pace and make sure you are strategic in your next steps. I've learned from failure, but those moments help you reach your goals and be successful.





# Crisp County High School Construction Department Awarded AGC Foundation Grant

**THE CONSTRUCTION** department at Crisp County High School in Cordele is putting a \$1,500 grant from AGC Georgia's Central Georgia/Southern Crescent Workforce Development Alliance to work!

Wyndell Hamrick, the school's construction program instructor, accepted the check on behalf of the school. The monies will assist Hamrick purchase much-needed materials to further grow and develop the program.

Christy Cranford, Director of Mar-

keting and Business Development for Sheridan Construction, recently visited the school and spoke with junior and senior students in the construction program about Sheridan Construction and opportunities throughout the company and the construction industry.

In addition to the check from the AGC Georgia Foundation, on behalf of the Alliance, L.E. Schwartz and Son, Inc., a roofing contractor located in Macon, donated roofing materials to the program. The supplies will help

with numerous projects, including a small structure built by students using primarily recycled materials. In the future, the program plans to sell the buildings as a fundraiser for the Crisp County Construction Program.

Pictured with the students are (l to r) Tara Shurley, Assistant Principal; Christy Cranford, Sheridan Construction; and Wyndell Hamrick, Construction Instructor/SkillsUSA Sponsor.



# CEFGA Builds Video Library to Connect with Students

Seeking to generate interest from students to pursue a career in the construction industry, CEFGA is building an online video library. CEFGA VIRTUAL is the organization's new learning management system (LMS). It's a multifaceted tool supporting the growth of the next generation of skilled trades workforce.

The video library creates a virtual presence similar to an educational institution for K-12 students. One of the courses, Viewfinder provides easily digestible content to teach students about the different sectors of the construction industry, as well as real world explanations of the different jobs available and the companies hiring for those positions.

"CEFGA's goal is to become the YouTube and LinkedIn for the construction industry in Georgia," said Matthew White, CEFGA's Director of Teacher Support. "We seek to engage students at a younger age with videos that grab their attention and then connect them with internships and other opportunities. However, we need the support of the entire

industry to develop these videos."

Students will learn through videos and material created by Georgia construction industry members. Additional online engagement content will be added to ensure students aren't bored watching video after video by measuring the quality of the material.

As they work through the content, students will earn digital badges. The LMS will also share how often students are earning specific badges and this will provide valuable feedback on quality of engagement and interest in an industry sector or company's content.

As the course evolves, other features will be utilized to show where the jobs for that sector are, who to contact for employment and how to learn more about preparing to enter that career field.

If your firm has interesting content hosted on YouTube or Vimeo that you can share with CEFGA, please connect with Matthew White at [matthew.white@cefga.org](mailto:matthew.white@cefga.org).

## GET INVOLVED!

The work-based learning content and videos are meant to engage 9th-12th grade students and help them secure an apprenticeship or full-time employment. As you look for content or are planning to create new content, please reach out Matthew White so you can receive a Video Do's & Don'ts List.



## MetroPower Apprenticeship Program "Signs" 17 High School Students



The MetroPower Workforce Development team builds relationships with local construction teachers in high schools near its branch offices to ensure it has a strong

talent pipeline. It's important that the company has a system in place to identify top talent for its entry-level apprentice program. MetroPower's "Signing Days" are a culmination of those efforts. This year, they recruited and hired 17 (potentially 18) high school graduates for eight locations throughout Georgia and Florida. Each of the signing events occurred in May prior to graduation ceremonies. Students signed a MetroPower agreement (not a contract) or received a special certificate from the school directly guaranteeing their place in our four-year program. Congratulations to these students and the teachers that have nurtured their interest in the construction industry.



*Industry leaders met on May 6 for a Laurens County High School Construction Program Advisory Meeting. This was the first in-person meeting the group has held since the beginning of the pandemic. The teachers were excited to meet with industry and share successes from their programs.*