

Members Making a Difference

Friday, November 21, 2014



Contractors Helping Develop Future Employees!

Grassroots efforts paying big dividends

While contractors are enjoying today's rebounding economy, the improved market presents challenges. One of the most pressing is finding skilled workers. Is your company tackling this issue? If not, what would you do if presented with two more project opportunities? Do you have enough skilled workers to fill that need?

Why should you care? For every four skilled field employees reaching retirement age, only one person is in training to begin a career in the construction industry. Who is going to build our future? (Read more at gobuildgeorgia.com/industry.)

AGC Georgia feels a strong obligation to be a part of finding solutions to this challenge. We benefit from collaborating with members to place an emphasis on finding innovative ways to inform students about meaningful careers available in the construction industry. One of the ways we are doing this is through our regional Workforce Development Alliances. In five years, we've grown from one alliance in central Georgia, to five more in south, southwest, east central, and southeast Georgia, and metro Atlanta. In January, we created a Workforce Development Taskforce. This group is comprised of contractors from all regions of the state. Compared to the regional Alliances, this group takes a broader look at ways AGC Georgia can get involved. This year alone, the Alliances and the taskforce have held 30 meetings.

One example of being involved is continuing our engagement with the Advisory Board of Governor Deal's **Go Build Georgia** initiative. Association leadership has been engaged with this since its inception. [Video from GPB Friday Night Football coverage spotlighting MetroPower.](http://goo.gl/IC2VoK) (<http://goo.gl/IC2VoK>)



We are experiencing a tremendous amount of success at the grassroots level. By asking individual contractors to partner with a high school or technical college construction program, the company is in a position to learn what challenges it faces. Some programs need tools and materials, while others simply want superintendents, project managers, or company owners to visit with students and share real-world advice so they better understand the opportunities available.

Included in this **Workforce Development Update** are *SOME* of the recent success stories from members' efforts. If your firm has a success story to share, please contact Bill Chambless, AGC Georgia's member development specialist at chambless@agcga.org or 478.972.5865. **Bill has a list of construction programs in Georgia, and can help you partner with a program of your choice.**

Areas of member involvement:

- Careers in Construction Days
- Construction Skills Events
- Providing Financial Support
- Contractors Connecting with Instructors/Students
- Educating School Boards
- Statewide Initiatives

Careers in Construction Days

- Members in south Georgia held their 3rd annual Careers in Construction event on September 23 with over 600 middle and high school students taking part in hands-on activities. All demonstrations and learning booths focused on teach construction skills. ([Valdosta Daily Times](http://www.valdosta-daily-times.com) at <http://goo.gl/H2SqkV>)
- Members in southwest Georgia held their 8th annual Careers in Construction event on September 25. More than 400 students attended this program.
- Central Georgia also hosted a career day, their second program, and over 300 students participated.

(below) In October, students visited Central Georgia Technical College for a career day. One station focused on technology used for construction projects.



(above) Students visited South Georgia's Career Day held at Wiregrass Technical College in September. The bridge building competition station was a big hit!

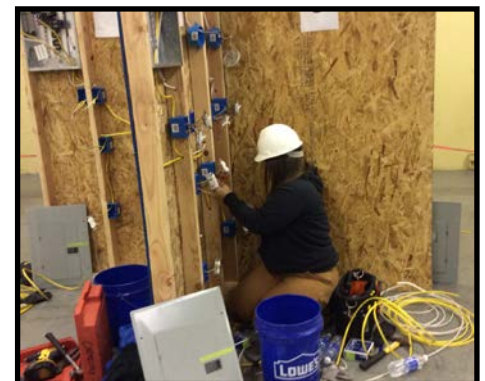
(below) During the Southwest Georgia Career Day, participants were allowed to try on fall protection equipment.



Construction Skills Events

These events offer a practice environment to prepare for competing in the SkillsUSA competition held at CEFGA's Construction Career Expo at the Georgia International Convention Center each March.

- East Georgia members hosted an event in November featuring seven trade competitions. Over 70 students competed, and nearly 300 observed so they could make plans to compete in 2015. ([Augusta Chronicle's coverage](http://www.augusta-chronicle.com) or <http://goo.gl/SXTSpT>) ([Video of Evans High School experience](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) or <http://goo.gl/PCLrIU>)
- A similar competition is planned in central Georgia for December.



Photos from the East Georgia Skills Challenge feature participants in the carpentry, electrical, masonry, and welding competitions. Two young ladies earned first place medals!

Providing Financial Support

- **East Central Georgia**

Many programs are unable to provide transportation for their students to participate in CEFGA's annual statewide Career Expo, or any of AGC Georgia's regional Careers in Construction Days. These same programs are also in need of tools and materials. Leaders from R. W. Allen, LLC reached out to programs in east central Georgia to see which were interested in taking students to the CareerExpo & SkillsUSA competition. Instructors from Burke Co., Jefferson Co., and Washington Co. expressed an interest, and the firm donated \$500 to each to help offset transportation expenses. Company leaders also worked to fulfill these schools' wish lists for materials and tools.

- **Upson-Lee and Lamar County High Schools**

Members in central Georgia are working to help several high school construction programs with limited budgets that need basic tools and materials. This fall, members toured the Upson-Lee construction lab.

Gerald Wread of Lamar County recently expressed the need to members of the area's regional workforce alliance for supplies to help students prepare for central Georgia's Construction Skills competition. All-State Electrical Constructors owner, Jacob Patton, was in a position to solve the problem and now looks forward to cheering the school's electrical team on at the skills challenge.



(above) Present at Upson-Lee's tour were superintendent, principal, vice principal, construction teacher and members from MetroPower and Piedmont Construction Group.

(below) Gerald Wread thanks Courtney Erikson of All-State Electrical Contractors for donated materials.



Contractors Connecting with Instructors and Students

- **Echols County High School**

Members Brian Geary, HR Director with ACE Electric, Inc.; and Walt Gill, President, True North Construction Group, Inc. joined Bill Chambless, AGC Georgia's member services specialist, to speak to students in Echols County. While these industry experts shared details about the workforce shortage and what apprenticeship programs are available, they also spent time explaining to the students the importance of leading a life that shows they are responsible. The group was also introduced to the term "soft skills" and learned about first impressions and how important it is to be a good team member.



The school's counselor handpicked several dozen seniors with an interest in construction to visit with contractor representatives during their lunch to learn more about the industry.

- ***Effingham College & Career Academy***

In early November, Academy principal invited Joe Marchese, owner of Marchese Construction, LLC and Bill Chambless, AGC Georgia member development specialist to visit with students and learn more about their curriculum. During time with the principal, Joe expressed concern about the local area not placing an emphasis on training workers for construction careers in light of the tremendous growth the area is experiencing. All stakeholders were very pleased with the discussion and look forward to continuing a dialogue on the topic.

During the visit a senior asked for a moment of Joe's time. The young man told Joe he has enlisted with the Air Guard and wanted to know if he had an opportunity for him with his company. Joe was very impressed with the young man's confidence and offered him a position with the understanding that he shows up every day to work he's not on duty with a great attitude. If he can meet this expectation, he'll find a way for him to contribute to his firm. Getting involved at the grassroots helps a firm find quality people. These experiences also leave a lasting impression on others who will now hear this student's story and understand this can happen to them if they choose to learn a construction trade.



(above) Joe Marchese took time to asked each student in the Academy's welding program what made them enroll, and if they saw themselves making a career in the construction industry.

- ***MAGIC Camp Jobsite Tour in Gwinnett County***

In August, 18 young ladies wrapped up a week-long program at Gwinnett Technical College with a jobsite tour of Bowen & Watson's Berkmar Central Relief Cluster Elementary School. The Mentoring a Girl in Construction Camp -MAGIC Camp- teaches construction skills to girls ages 14 to 18. This camp was free to attend due in part to Bowen & Watson's sponsorship. ([Gwinnett Daily Post video & article](http://www.gwinnettdaily.com) or <http://goo.gl/mJ7S82>)



(above) Representatives of Bowen & Watson, including President Keith Watson hosted the tour and answered questions from camp participants.

- ***Godley Middle School***

In October, members Gilbane Building Company, Mock Plumbing and Mechanical, Inc. and H. A. Sack Company, Inc. introduced students in Pooler to construction. The visit included a presentation in the field office describing the scope of the project, what technology is being used to manage it. Students walked the jobsite, meeting employees and hearing from each of them about their roles on the project and what path they took to get to where they are today in the construction industry.



Over 50 students involved in Godley's Future Business Leaders of America Club toured the jobsite.

Contractors Connecting with Instructors and Students *(continued)*

- **Burke and Washington County High Schools**

Earlier this fall, R. W. Allen, LLC hosted two jobsite tours for students in construction classes at Burke County and Washington County High Schools.



President of R. W. Allen, LLC, Scott Clark, was present for both jobsite tours along with project managers and superintendents to help answer the students' questions.

- **Lumpkin County High School**

Swofford Construction, Inc. continues to host students from the construction class at Lumpkin County High School as their Camp Glisson Dining Hall Project takes shape. The school's construction teacher, Jeff Bearinger, was extremely complimentary of the learning environment offered during each visit. The Swofford team looks forward to having the students be a part of the project until its completion.



Joe Tuggle, executive vice president of Swofford Construction, Inc. and project superintendent Rick Reed lead students around during two jobsite tours.



Educating School Boards on the Need for Construction Programs

- **Lamar County**

Together, MetroPower, Parrish Construction Company, Inc., Piedmont Construction Group, and Sheridan Construction Company met with leaders of the Lamar County school system. Their efforts resulted in the system deciding to place a renewed emphasis in the program rather than closing it. These members continue to stay in touch with the school and offer support as requested to help grow the program.

- ***Savannah-Chatham County Public School System***

During a recent meeting of the SCCPSS, David Hamilton, executive vice president of Elkins Constructors, Inc. and Bill Chambless spoke about projections for construction activity in southeast Georgia, and how the industry was currently suffering from a workforce shortage. They requested school leaders to consider placing greater emphasis on construction curriculum at the Windsor Forest High School and the Woodville-Tompkins Technical and Career High School. All board members were very open to learning more and visiting with successful high school construction programs in south Georgia to learn best practices.



AGC Georgia is eager to work with contractors when they arrange for meetings with local business and school leaders to talk about the need for a greater focus on construction education.

Statewide Initiatives

- Mike Dunham, AGC Georgia CEO, facilitated six learning sessions for 600 high school students on what employers are looking for at the **SkillsUSA Fall Leadership Conference** in Jekyll Island. He used the opportunity to also speak about the career opportunities in the construction industry.



Students attending the Leadership Conference were officers of their school's SkillsUSA chapter.

- AGC Georgia hosted an Instructor Appreciation Dinner at our Training Center in July for our state's construction teachers who attended the **Georgia Association for Career and Technical Education (GACTE) annual conference**. Mike Dunham, AGC Georgia's CEO, along with Mike Kenig, chair of the Chapter's Workforce Development Taskforce and Ryan Byars, both of Holder Construction Company were featured speakers at the GACTE conference.



*(above) Daniel Maxon speaks to instructors about best practices in construction safety.
(below) Instructors work with industry professionals in the construction lab.*

- Daniel Maxon, New South Construction Company; Reuben Bennett, ACE Electric, Inc.; David Flynt, Allen-Graham, Inc.; Tony Varamo, MetroPower; and Bill Chambless attended **Camp T & I (Trade and Industry)** held at the Golden Isles Career Academy this summer. The camp invites Georgia's CTAE instructors to learn from industry representatives and take best practices to the classroom. Members in attendance offered hands-on demonstrations to instructors.

- Dozens of members are actively engaged in planning and participating in the annual **CEFGA CareerExpo and state SkillsUSA competition**.

