

April 24, 2006

Issue: Camden County's Workforce

Based on the Economic Diversification Study conducted by Georgia Tech, the Workforce Development Assessment (WFD) was developed. From the WFD Assessment the 13 key recommendations were reviewed and the committee chose the six most critical areas to focus their efforts. Members were tasked with selecting three recommendations from the six that need the earliest attention of the taskforce.

1. Camden County's workforce development organizations should jointly create a permanent "one-stop consortium" to provide a fully integrated system of workforce development services. The consortium, operating via a task force, should include representatives from each of the organizations profiled in this report and from the business community.
2. Generally, workforce development professionals should work in concert with Camden's economic development leadership on initiatives to foster job growth and development, especially in the knowledge-based business (KBB) sectors. These include supporting various marketing activities, expanding efforts to foster entrepreneur skills among students and adults, continuing to stay in tune with existing business and industry to address their expansion needs from a workforce perspective, and continuing to emphasize, as well as look for ways to expand, incorporating math, science, and technical skills in all academic and vocational programs.
3. Camden County should expand career development counseling efforts to students, from early grades through 12th grade. Expanding on the existing efforts to mentor students on how they need to prepare for various jobs, county leadership should consider developing "real life fact sheets" to help students understand the basics on required educational achievements, including various post-secondary avenues, basic expenses to expect while pursuing careers, related salaries, and what those salaries mean in real terms. Such efforts should be targeted to elementary grades and up. In addition, the community should consider hosting career days especially geared to young children. Such efforts could help Camden address work ethic issues early on. Efforts should be taken to especially target and provide resources to at-risk students for not performing to their full potential.

The taskforce has met over a four month period to work on devising a plan to implement the recommendations. The group has set a high priority toward participating in local municipal and county meetings to promote the initiative into the county's comprehensive plan being developed by the Regional Development Center. This is the first time that all institutions of higher learning have met collectively to accomplish long-term initiatives. More importantly the information and subsequent publicity that the group will produce, should have a direct impact on existing and potential employers by facilitating the process of defining workforce training needs.

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