

Issue: Camden County's Workforce Development

The Workforce Development Taskforce initiated by the Camden County Chamber of Commerce (CCCC) has met since 2005 to work in devising plans to implement the recommendations from the Economic Diversification [study] of Camden County. This committee of nearly 20 stakeholders has set a high priority toward creating a unified county focus on workforce development. Accomplishments of the group include:

- Uniting all institutions of higher learning to collectively accomplish long term initiatives.
- Supporting the continued alignment of high school programs with postsecondary readiness.
- Producing publicity that informs citizens and employers about initiatives that impact training and employment opportunities.
- Preparing documentation and data for alignment with Georgia Work Ready initiatives.
- Providing Georgia Work Ready testing to over 200 high school students with opportunities for certification, job placement and remediation where needed.
- Collaborating with the Small Business Committee of the CCCC to maximize information and opportunities for employers and stakeholders.

More importantly the information and subsequent publicity the group will produce, should have a direct impact on existing and potential employers by facilitating the process of defining workforce training needs.

The study emphasized the need to develop knowledge-based businesses and the strength of the local public education system (both secondary and post secondary) in the areas of math and science. The workforce group has been instrumental in providing advisement for the Smaller Learning Community conversion at Camden County High School. The conversion will take place for the 2009 school year and will offer enrollment to students in grades 9 – 12 into one of five Career Academies:

- Health and Environmental Science
- Engineering and Industrial Technology
- Fine Arts
- Business Technology
- Government Services

This conversion will promote vertical alignment (among multiple postsecondary options) and relevant instruction for all students. Focus will be on encouraging students to design individual career plans that will prepare them for their postsecondary opportunities. Whether students plan to enter the workforce, the military or technical college, associate degree or bachelor's degree programs following high school graduation, the academic study within career academies will link learning to real-world application and promote rigor and relevance in all levels of instruction.

Action: Promotion by the taskforce of related opportunities will only enhance the development of potential options for the Camden community to recruit, develop and implement people, program and place resources as a major component of building and empowering Camden's workforce.

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