

EconDev Greene

A newsletter of business
and economic
development activity in
Greene County, Georgia

Fall 2017



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Greene Awarded \$3.15 Million Grant for New College & Career Academy

On December 7, the Greene College and Career Academy's (GCCA) application for the Technical College System of Georgia's (TCSG) competitive College and Career Academy grant was approved by the TCSG Board of Directors. In addition to the certification, the approval includes a \$3.15 million award to help establish the college and career academy. Eight counties applied for the award and three were selected, including Greene County. The selection process included an extensive, 14-part application and a formal presentation to a panel of TCSG college and career academy evaluators.

"Before and during the application process, our community and business partners worked diligently to write a grant that would benefit all students living in Greene County. Our application clearly showed our determination to be progressive in the way our teachers teach and our students learn. This Academy is going to be a great place for our students to attend. It's a wonderful thing when our community unites to ensure educational opportunities that will lead to the prosperity of our students," said GCCA CEO John Ellenberg. The Greene College and Career Academy will have its own Governing Board consisting primarily of local business representatives. It is a joint venture with Athens Technical College and partnerships with the Taliaferro County School System and Lake Oconee Academy. (Continued on Page 2)



Greene County Board of Commissioners
Gary Usry, Chairman
Dist. 1 Angela Walker Deering
Dist. 2 Jeffrey L. Smith
Dist. 3 Jonathan Human
Dist. 4 Ernie Filice
Byron Lombard, County Manager

Greene Awarded \$3.15 Million State Grant for New College and Career Academy

(Continued from Page 1)

“The Greene College and Career Academy in partnership with Athens Technical College and other community partners will provide opportunities for high school students to explore technical pathways. This Career Academy will not only benefit Greene County, but also the state of Georgia,” said Dr. Andrea Daniel, President of Athens Technical College. “Athens Technical College is extremely excited to be a part of bringing the Career Academy to Greene County. I would like to thank the business partners, the Greene County Board of Education and the staff of Greene County School System for all of their hard work on this effort.”

Initially, there will be 14 pathways - agriculture, audio visual, automotive, business management, construction, cosmetology, culinary arts, customer service, early college essentials, engineering, health care, JROTC, manufacturing operations and welding - available to students. “The career pathway programs to be offered at GCCA will be aligned with the needs of local business and industry. Simply put, GCCA will educate and train students by providing current and future skill sets needed for job opportunities right here in Greene County. The result will be a well-educated, highly trained workforce that is the key to our community’s growth and success in the future. It is an exciting time to be a student in Greene County!” said Ellenberg.

“We’re not just establishing a college and career academy, we are building a climate and culture from crayons to college, and every student is capable and will be prepared to go to college,” said Greene County School System Superintendent Dr. Chris Houston.

Lt. Governor Casey Cagle and Senator Burt Jones praised Greene County Schools on winning the grant. “I’m excited that Greene County will build Georgia’s next College and Career Academy,” said Lt. Governor Cagle. “I’m proud of Greene County Schools, local industry and the many partners who are making this significant investment in educating our students for the jobs that will lead our community’s growth in the future,” said Sen. Jones. Following the announcement from TCSG, Greene County Board of Education Chairman Mike Lynch and Larry Kludt, newly elected Chairman of the GCCA Governance Board, thanked the community for supporting the district through the grant application process.



Pictured left are members of the Greene County Board of Education, Athens Technical College, the College and Career Academy Governing Board and Steering Committee and key staff members who attended the Technical College System of Georgia board meeting.

“I would like to thank our many community volunteers, our business community partners, our school district staff and many other community service organizations (e.g. Greene County Chamber of Commerce, Atlas Ministry, the Pete Nance Boys and Girls Club, etc.), our partners Taliaferro County Schools and Lake Oconee Academy, our colleagues at Athens Technical College and the Greene County Board of Education to name a few,” said Kludt. “This shows us that we can compete at the state level and win. I believe this also shows what we can do in this county when we all come together and work to a common goal,” added Lynch.

The doors of the Greene College and Career Academy will officially open to students in August 2018. In the meantime, a great deal of work will be done to prepare the facility to offer state-of-the-art industry labs to meet the needs of the industries served in our community. (Source: Greene County School System Press Release-12/7/2017)



New Tru by Hilton™ Hotel Slated for Greensboro, Town Center at Lake Oconee



A new addition to the Greensboro and Exit 130 area will be coming soon. Tru By Hilton will be breaking ground soon for an 82 room hotel facility. Tru is a brand-new hotel experience from Hilton that offers a vibrant, affordable and young-at-heart environment. The Tru will offer:

- Large 2,880 square-foot lobby with room to work, play games, and lounge
- Smaller, more efficiently designed rooms with comfortable beds and 55” TVs
- Desk spaces in lobby in semi-private, sound-absorbing alcoves
- Open closets with colorful wall hooks, storage for folded items on the shelves under the TV, and luggage space under the bed.
- Large bathrooms with tons of counter space and light, standing glass-door showers
- Free, fast Wi-Fi and charging outlets throughout the lobby and guestrooms. Print from anywhere in the hotel with free wireless printing.
- 24/7 eat and sip market with local, gourmet snacks and drinks, single-serve beer and wine, complimentary coffee, tea and hot chocolate
- Free "Top It" breakfast with sweet and savory toppings
- Fitness Center

Owner and Operator, Hiren Bhatwala, expects to employ up to 20 employees when the hotel opens. The target date for groundbreaking is March-April 2018 with the opening expected in 2019. The City of Greensboro’s Architectural Review Board has approved the new hotel subject to a “historical palate” of colors on the exterior of the structure.

In addition to the new hotel, construction is expected to begin in 2018 on a Burger King restaurant along the frontage of Lake Oconee Parkway.

Local Businesses Nibco, Publix and Lake Oconee Academy Expanding



Nibco, (left) one of our top 10 employers is making good progress on the 122,000 square foot expansion to their manufacturing facility in Greensboro. This combination manufacturing and distribution facility will relocate distribution operations to the new building and manufacturing will expand within the existing building. Nibco has added **65** new full-time jobs over the last two years.

Publix at Lake Oconee (right)

has opened its \$3 million expansion to their now 65,000 square foot store on Lake Oconee Parkway. The expansion project will be completed in the near future as Publix renovates the right side of the existing store space.



Lake Oconee Academy's New Upper School Buildings. **High School Building** (above -left) - A 20,000 square foot, two-story classroom building will be the academic centerpiece of the upper school. **Student Activity Center** (above - right) - A two-story, 32,000 sq. ft. Student Activity Center will provide extracurricular and dining facilities for the upper school students and common areas to benefit the entire student body.

Lake Oconee Academy Breaks Ground for New Upper School Building, Student Activity Center



The Iron Horse Plant Sciences Farm (IHPSF), commonly known as the Iron Horse Farm, is the University of Georgia's newest farm. Located approximately halfway between Watkinsville and Greensboro in Greene County, the farm is less than 25 miles from Athens. The mission of this farm is to provide support for field research, demonstrations, and a teaching laboratory convenient for use by research leaders and teachers from the **Crop and Soil Sciences Department**, as well as by other departments and agencies. The farm is **660 acres**, and its predominant usage is in field research.

The Iron Horse Plant Sciences Farm is notable also for being the home of the historic **statue** of the Iron Horse, a legendary piece of Athens lore. To learn more about the Iron Horse Plant Sciences Farm and the Iron Horse Statue, visit their website at:

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/departments/crop-soil/about/facilities/iron-horse-plant-sciences-farm.html>



On Thursday, Nov. 16, Lake Oconee Academy students, teachers, administration, families, board members, and the community took part in a groundbreaking ceremony for a new high school campus. The high school expansion project will include two new buildings, seventeen classrooms and two science labs. The campus will also house a student life center with a cafeteria and a gymnasium.

The school secured financing for the \$18 million expansion through the United States Department of Agriculture Community (USDA) Facilities Direct Loan Program. The USDA program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas.

The LOA Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising funds to enrich the educational experience of every LOA student, announced that it has raised an additional \$2.3 million for the expansion project through the "Fulfilling Our Commitment" capital campaign. The campaign was created to provide philanthropic support for the high school project and will fund items such as advanced technologies, furnishings, safety measures, equipment, and green space for the high school campus.

Once the project is completed, the LOA Foundation will enter into a long-term lease agreement with Lake Oconee Academy, Inc. This contractual relationship meets the specifications addressed in the charter renewal for self-funding future facilities expansions without drawing additional facilities funds from the school district.

Greene County Unemployment Rate Remains at 4.5%

Greene County’s unemployment rate continued to fall to 4.5% in September 2017. Greene’s unemployment rate has not dropped below 4.5% since July 2001 (4.1%). This trend is consistent with the Georgia unemployment rate which was at 4.4% and the Northeast Georgia Region at 4.0% in September. Surrounding neighbor counties Oconee and Morgan were slightly lower than Greene at 3.3 and 3.9% respectively. Jackson County’s rate of 3.2% was the lowest unemployment rate of all counties in Georgia in September. (Source: U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)



Source: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/GAGREE3URN>

Greene County Building Permit Activity

January to November - 2016 to 2017 Comparison

Category	2017 Valuations**	2016 Valuations**	% Change
Additions/Renovations	\$ 3,733	\$ 6,589	-43%
Lake Seawalls/Docks	\$ 1,694	\$ 1,986	-15%
New Residential	\$92,231	\$81,384	13%
New Commercial	\$ 6,189*	\$ 1,813	241%
Other	\$ 2,277	\$ 604	276%

*Mostly Publix Renovation, Ritz Carlton Pavilion, Harbor Club Boat Storage permits **Valuations in Thousands



Pure Beauty Farms of Georgia (a/k/a Horizon Growers), a wholesale plant nursery headquartered in Redlands, Florida, has been growing for over 23 years. Pure Beauty Farms supply home improvement garden centers, independent garden centers, retailers, and landscapers throughout the U.S. offering over 100 color varieties of annuals, perennials, and holiday plants. Their **Greensboro, Georgia** nursery operation consists of approximately 130 acres and five greenhouses. Pure Beauty Farms expects to grow and ship an estimated 500,000 poinsettia plants from their Greensboro facility this holiday season.

Athens Technical College, Greensboro Campus has seven Graduates from first ManufactuREADY Class

In November, **Athens Technical College, Greensboro Campus** held a graduation ceremony for the first seven graduates of the new **ManufactuREADY** class.

The **ManufactuREADY** class is an intensive six-week program that prepares unemployed individuals for success in the field of manufacturing. The class provides a blend of hard skills such as **MIG Welding Basics, Electricity Basics, Cranes & Rigging** and others with necessary soft skills like **Developing as a Professional, Interpersonal Communications, Interviewing with Success, and Positive Attitude in the workplace.**

Graduates also earned crucial certifications including **OSHA-10, Basic Forklift Operator, CPR, First Aid & AED, Lean Six Sigma White Belt and Georgia Best – Soft Skills.** Congratulations to the new **ManufactuREADY** graduates.



To find out more about Greene County and development opportunities in our community contact: **Sam Young, Economic Development Director at 706-454-7022 or email at syoung@greencountyga.gov**

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