

# Developing Our Future Workforce



**Carol Burrell**  
President & CEO,  
Northeast Georgia Health  
System; Chair, Greater Hall  
Chamber of Commerce

The initiatives of the Greater Hall Workforce Development Task Force, founded in 2015, are vital to the state of our current and future economy. These programs, developed through volunteer leadership, participating industries, educators and business professionals, are shaping the future of our community. Partnering with Vision 2030's Education Consortium, this Chamber program is making great strides in linking the energy of our youth with local industries and businesses to grow a workforce for today and tomorrow.

The Chamber and VISION 2030 initiated the 7th Grade Career Path Fairs last year and is a collaborative initiative with the University of North Georgia and Lanier Technical College. The program seeks to help local middle school students become aware of career opportunities in Gainesville and Hall County. Two Career Path Fairs have been scheduled for spring 2019 with an estimated 1,200 7th graders participating with 45 area businesses, representing over 16 different career paths.

Forty-five area companies representing over a dozen career paths will have the opportunity to impact students on just how interesting their business is! Each of the 1,200 students have chosen four career paths of interest and following the event will choose one of those career pathways to focus on during their plan of study in high school. Some of the high school completed career paths come with certifications and all give the student more employability in an area of their interest. The objective is to let students become acquainted with local people representing local opportunities in the career path of their choice.

The goal is to inform students of careers that they can build right here at home. The Career Path Fairs give 7th graders an opportunity for a "light bulb" moment to connect to a career that will inspire them prior to entering high school.

Planning and sponsoring organizations for the program include the Greater Hall Chamber, Vision 2030, University of North Georgia, Lanier Technical College, Hall County School System, Gainesville City School System, Georgia Mountains Worksource, Chick-fil-A, the Georgia Beverage Association, Edward Jones/Michael Lancaster and Cochran Brothers Electric.

Details: Shelley Davis, Chamber Vice President of Existing Industry, or Elizabeth Higgins, Executive Director of Vision 2030, at 770-532-6206.



**Jose Gonzalez** of **Cochran Brothers Electric** shows students how to program a Variable Frequency Drive to control assembly lines based on speed demands at the 7th Grade Career Path Fair on March 14 at the University of North Georgia Gainesville Campus. The event gave over 500 students the opportunity to learn about various career options to help guide them with their plan of study in high school. A second career path fair is scheduled for April 12 at Lanier Technical College.

## BUSINESS LINK

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