

## Forging Partnerships for Economic Development at Coweta Works' First Annual Career Expo

Groups of chatty eighth graders crowding around a "walk-through colon," a mock film crew, or a bucket truck doesn't sound like a typical career fair. But this is exactly what the Central Educational Center is pioneering with Coweta Works Career Expo as a way of investing in Coweta County's economic future.

This first annual event allowed eighth grade students from all over Coweta County the oppor-



A drone's eye view of Coweta Works' utility section. (Inset picture) A couple of students turn the lights on and off at Newnan Utilities' pole exhibit.

tunity to explore what adults do on a day-to-day basis. The expo featured exhibits in eight different areas:

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Health care
- Manufacturing and Engineering
- Media and Communications
- Public Safety
- Transportation and Logistics
- Utilities

Eighth grade students from six public middle schools, Coweta Charter Academy, Odyssey Charter School and Maggie Brown Middle School Alternative Program attended the two-day event. All in all, students numbered over 1,700, not including around 80 educators in attendance.

"This is the first time in the history of CEC that every eighth grader had a chance to visit," said Cynthia Bennett, vice-president of the Newnan-Coweta ChamGrade Assistant Principal Dr. Herbert Betts.

Bennett highlighted the students from the alternative middle school, saying they "had a ball. I greeted them and they looked sullen, and by the end they all had smiles on their faces."

Aside from allowing eighth graders to explore career options, Bennett said "this is a clear example of how the business community and the education community work together to strengthen economic development in Coweta County."

"The availability of skilled talent is the first question a prospective company looking to relocate their business asks," said Amanda Fields, "and an event like Coweta Works will help us paint the picture of the community coming together with an innovative approach to workforce development." Fields is the Director of Existing Industries and Workforce Development at the Coweta County Development Authority.

#### Since this event was the first Coweta Works Career Expo, many students and teachers didn't know

ber of Commerce

the Coweta Works

and co-chair of

Career Expo.

what to expect. "We've had people come out and give talks before, but when they actually get to go out and talk to people and get that hands-on experience, it gets them engaged and interested," said Madras Middle School's Eighth



## The President's Message

Chris Stephens President and CEO

When Coweta-Fayette EMC was formed over 70 years ago, our primary goal was to bring electricity to underserved areas. While providing reliable, affordable electricity remains our primary responsibility today, we also embrace our responsibility to help build stronger, more enriched communities.

We take an active role in attracting new industries to our area. These businesses not only mean jobs for our neighbors, they also generate tax revenue necessary for our communities to thrive and expand. By being proactive in economic development, CFEMC helps create opportunities that enhance our members quality of life and the regional economy as a whole.

We have an economic evelopment team who not only seeks to attract new business, but also works with existing commercial accounts to foster their prosperity. Our Senior Director of Economic Development currently serves and has served on various economic development boards within the southeast, at a state level and regionally here in West Georgia. He works closely with the local development authorities and our statewide EMC, Georgia EMC, in helping promote our service area in order to recruit potential new businesses and industry.

We actively participate in three local Chambers of Commerce–Fayette, Coweta and Heard. Employees have served on these Chamber boards and committees helping secure a better future for our members' businesses.

We also support our educational systems by offering scholarships and serving on boards and committees to help prepare the workforce necessary to meet the needs of existing and future industry.

It is a privilege to be a part of these groups and a role that Coweta-Fayette EMC takes seriously.

Affordable electricity is essential for a healthy, growing community, and CFEMC helps generate an environment conducive to economic growth. After all, we're part of this community, too, and we will work together to ensure a brighter future for us all.



## The Power of Building Strong Communities Through Economic Development

Not everyone can say, "I love to drive by a business and see cars in the parking lot and



know that I had a hand in keeping the facility open," but that is exactly why Greg Wright says he loves about his job.

Wright is Coweta-Fayette EMC's Senior Director of Community and Economic Development. He started in 2017

after eight years as Coweta County Development Authority's director.

CFEMC initiated the department of Community and Economic Development only a couple of years ago as a way of increasing involvement with the chambers of commerce and development authorities for Coweta and Fayette counties, but the growing department encompasses much more.

"First and foremost, we live in the community," said Wright. "We're making an investment in the community and area," he said.

At Coweta-Fayette EMC, we've always been about empowering our community because it's part of the fabric of who we are. Every cooperative follows a set of guiding principles, including concern for community.

But not every electrical cooperative has a department like this.

"It says a lot that Coweta-Fayette EMC is willing to invest time and resources into economic and community development," said Wright.

More than economic development alone, community development includes healthcare, education, non-profit investments and more. Wright made it clear that "it's not only about the number of people, but also about skills."

CFEMC's investment in community enriches workers, and a better-quality workforce gives

existing businesses more stability and prospective businesses an extra incentive to locate here.

Part of Wright addressing this area's needs means that he embraces an ever-changing schedule. "There's something new every day. One day I could be meeting with a local business, working on an expansion project, going to the state capitol, or working on a project with the Development Authority or Chamber of Commerce," said Wright.

Wright knows that in community and economic development, many hands work together to get things done. He said, "It's great to know that I am part of a team that is working to take

care of families by making sure there are good jobs in this community." More than bringing you power, Coweta-Fayette EMC will always strive to enhance the quality of life in our community because as a cooperative, we are a family that works together.

#### **Economic Development Partnerships** continued from cover

"We have to start reaching our future talent pool before they are a Junior or Senior in high school," Fields added.

Fields said, "There are so many opportunities available to students in Coweta County-from apprenticeships to dual enrollment to work based learning-and if we want them to make educated decisions about their futures, we have to step up and give them every opportunity to be informed about their options!"

As a part of Coweta-Fayette EMC's commitment to community and economic development, we partnered with Newnan Utilities to set up an exhibit highlighting linemen's work. The exhibit featured a 55-foot-tall bucket truck along with utility poles with circuits for students to open and close.

Working with each group of eighth graders at the exhibit, Rusty Rainey, Safety Coordinator for CFEMC, said, "you're looking at the next generation of linemen coming up."

According to Rick Barnes of Newnan Utilities, forging partnerships for economic development is essential because "we work smarter and safer when we work together. It's like a three-cord rope. If one cord comes loose, so do all of them."

CFEMC sees itself as an essential cord in the rope that is our community. We want to make sure each cord is strong so Coweta and Fayette Counties can prosper.

If your school would like Coweta-Fayette EMC to be a guest at your next career fair, please contact VP of Communications & PR Chellie Phillips at *cphillips@utility.org*.



Coweta-Fayette

Rusty Rainey coaches an eighth grader through opening a circuit.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Coweta-Fayette EMC strives to do all it can for our schools and businesses. For example, in 2016 and 2017, CFEMC provided two Coweta County schools with rebates for energy efficiency improvements.

"The Coweta County School System received a generous rebate through Coweta-Fayette EMC for energy

upgrades on lighting and HVAC systems at the recently renovated Northside Elementary and Canongate

Elementary schools. These upgrades have



improved the lighting quality in the classrooms as well as provided greater overall energy efficiency. Coweta-Fayette EMC continues to be a strong education partner in Coweta County," said Dr. Steve Barker, Superintendent of Coweta County School System.

Enabling our community's schools to get energy efficiency upgrades delivers two powerful things:

- A more comfortable learning environment for young minds
- More energy savings to use toward meeting educational needs

"The commercial energy efficiency rebates we paid to the local schools is just one of many areas in which we partner with the school systems to help them remain successful," said Jimmy Adams, CFEMC Vice President of Energy Services. "New and existing industries benefit when the local school systems are strong."

Education is a key component of ensuring future economic health and stability, and Coweta-Fayette EMC is proud to take part in strengthening our schools. Chris Stephens, President and CEO C. Bradford Sears, Jr. Attorney Douglas B. Warner, Attorney

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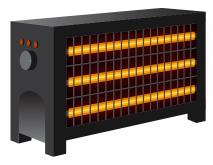
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# What's driving up your home's energy consumption?



Space heaters can be expensive to run and are generally less efficient than central furnace heating. If you only use a single room of the house during winter and

do not want to heat up the entire home, then a space heater can cost less to operate. You can lower the temperature of the entire house and set up a space heater in a room if you have good insulation .

Space heaters can be dangerous if they are not carefully monitored. Always read the manual of your space heater and make sure you are using it

properly. Unvented combustion units are not recommended for use inside your home, because they introduce unwanted pollutants into the living space.

If nothing else, grab a warm blanket or sweater along with your favorite warm drink!



#### Doing the Math!

For an idea of how much it may cost you to operate a space heater, our members pay on average 12 cents per kilowatt hour. A space heater that uses 1500 watts per hour uses 1.5 kilowatt hours. Therefore, each hour it is run will cost you 1.5 times 12 cents or about 18 cents per hour it runs. Running it 5 hours a day would cost 90 cents, \$6.30 weekly (7day week), and \$25.20 monthly.

