

PRESS RELEASE: NORTHWEST GEORGIA EMBARKS ON GOVERNOR'S HIGH DEMAND CAREER INITIATIVE (HDCI)

In May 2017, the Georgia Department of Economic Development's Workforce Division announced the recipients of the Governor's High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI). The purpose of HDCI is to identify what industries will be in most need of skilled workers and ensure a sustainable pipeline of workers. Building on previous partnerships created in the region between industry and educators, the Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Board (WIB) was awarded a \$232,200 Sector Partnership grant through the State Workforce Development Board, which administers federal Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA) funds in the region.

Led by Governor Nathan Deal, the economic development community in Georgia, has heard from the businesses across the state that one of the greatest challenges is the need for a consistent, trained and reliable workforce. In response, Governor Deal created the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI) to bring partners from the University System of Georgia (USG), the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), and local K-12 systems to hear directly from the private sector about their specific workforce needs (i.e., degrees/majors, certificates, courses, skillsets, etc.). With decision makers from each of these entities working together, the region will gain a clear picture of what businesses need, pair them with existing assets, and formulate a plan to tackle any gaps that may exist.

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) submitted a proposal to the state on behalf of the 15-county Northwest Georgia region that focused on advanced manufacturing; bringing together the local government, the private sector, local high schools and community colleges to build a network of partners. The goal of HDCI is that this partnership will enable an education system responsive to the needs of advanced manufacturers in the region, and create a pipeline of workforce talent poised to apply their knowledge and creativity in a variety of industries. The opportunities created through the HDCI sector strategy will reach across all advanced manufacturing sectors. The NWGRC includes a 15-county region, comprised of the following Georgia counties: Bartow, [Catoosa](#), [Chattooga](#), [Dade](#), Fannin, [Floyd](#), [Gilmer](#), [Gordon](#), [Haralson](#), [Murray](#), [Paulding](#), [Pickens](#), [Polk](#), [Walker](#), and [Whitfield](#).

How can you help? Advanced manufacturing is tied to the economic development and long-term viability of communities in the Northwest Georgia region and beyond the state's borders. Global competitiveness in the northwest Georgia region relies on the strength of the manufacturing sector. Since 2013, the NWGRC and the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI²) have been working to convene a diverse consortium of manufacturers, community leaders, Chambers of Commerce and Development Authorities, industry associations, local schools and technical colleges and other stakeholders in the region to understand industry needs and plan for the growth of advanced manufacturing in the region.

The project began with a kickoff meeting on September 28th, 2017 in Calhoun, Georgia. During the remainder of the 2017 calendar year, the NWGRC and EI² will be contacting additional partners in the region who may have a stake in the HDCI strategy, and scheduling interviews with these stakeholders.

If you have any questions about HDCI or ideas for manufacturing education in the region, please contact project manager Candice McKie at Candice.mckie@gatech.edu or Terri Morgan at tmorgan@nwgrc.org.

More information on HDCI is available on Georgia's HDCI project page:

<http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/programs-initiatives/high-demand-career-initiative-hdci/>.

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