

Press Release: The Whetstone Group Presents LEAD thru Workforce Innovations at the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce November Eggs and Enterprise Breakfast.

Business leaders from throughout North Fulton County turned out to hear Jeff Scroggins of Whetstone present on a community workforce planning initiative called Linking Economic and Academic Development (LEAD) thru Workforce Innovations.

Among the attendees of the presentation was Tedra Cheatham the COO and Vice President of Economic Development for the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce. In regards to Whetstone's speaker Jeff Scroggins, Ms. Cheatham stated that "Jeff did a terrific job of framing the issue of the lack of preparation of students for the workforce. The session stimulated conversation in the business community as to ways they can be better involved in the process. I think this is something every community should be discussing as we prepare our students to be our future workforce."

LEAD is a proven concept that brings a community's economic development initiatives, educational system and local industry together in a partnership, creating a synergistic approach and an innovative solution to the skilled workforce needs specific to that community.

With over 65% of current jobs now requiring a skilled workforce, baby boomers retiring in large numbers (taking with them years of highly skilled knowledge and experience) and national high school dropout rates varying from 30% to 70%, many communities are experiencing a tremendous void in the skilled employee pipelines needed to meet their current and future workforce demands.

The academic programs created as a result of the collaboration efforts of these entities allow students to graduate from high school with nationally recognized industry certifications, college credit and their high school diploma... all of which make them readily employable contributors to the local economy and skilled workforce pool. LEAD is a targeted solution to issues affecting today's skilled work force demands while also building "tomorrow's talent pipeline".

"It was an honor to share this exciting and revolutionary academic model, named '*the national model for career education*' by the US Department of Labor, with the business leaders of Fulton County." - Melissa Bumpers, Founder and Partner, The Whetstone Group.

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