

*NEWS from the Public Relations Office*

## **East Central Tech**

667 Perry House Rd. Fitzgerald, GA 31750  
229/468-2000 FAX: 229/468-2110

Howard Jordan  
Public Relations

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### **Governor Perdue Announces New Work Ready Regions Grants Regions Targeted Innovative, Growing Industries**

ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue today announced \$1.6 million in federally-funded grants to four Georgia regions working toward earning Work Ready Region status. These regions bring together their assets and leaders to create regional talent pools targeting existing strategic industries and to increase economic development opportunities.

“By aligning our assets and working collaboratively to attract and grow jobs in our state’s strategic industries, Georgia Work Ready Regions are making our state a more attractive destination for companies,” said Governor Perdue. “This effort is reaping great rewards and I am happy to be able to add the four new regions.”

The four new Work Ready Regions grant recipients include South Georgia for bioscience, East Central Georgia for energy, Metro-Atlanta (Western Innovation Crescent) for bioscience and South Central Georgia for advanced manufacturing. Additional counties may be added to some regions as the Work Ready Region process proceeds. The counties include Atkinson, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brooks, Burke, Clayton, Cobb, Coffee, Colquitt, Columbia, Cook, Echols, Fulton, Glascock, Hancock, Irwin, Jefferson, Jenkins, Lanier, Lincoln, Lowndes, McDuffie, Richmond, Screven, Taliaferro, Warren, Wilcox and Worth.

The potential Work Ready Regions will each receive a \$400,000 grant to assist in increasing the skill level of its workforce. Specifically, increasing the number of individuals in the workforce holding a Work Ready Certificate, ensuring each county in the region earns Certified Work Ready Community status, encouraging local employers to complete Work Ready job profiles and developing industry specific career pathways for the emerging, transitioning and existing workforce. An important component of their work will be aligning regional available workforce work readiness skill levels to those needed to fill strategic industry jobs.

“By developing a pipeline of qualified workers, Georgia can ensure that companies will have one of their most important resources for continued growth and innovation,” said

Governor Perdue. “Our Work Ready Regions are establishing career pathways that lead to life-long learning among our citizens and a bright future for our employers.”

Each regional effort is being led by a local businessperson associated with the strategic industry, according to Debra Lyons, director of the Governor’s Office of Workforce Development (GOWD). This leader will work closely with GOWD through the Work Ready Region academy to ensure continuity of efforts among the various regions, and will assemble an industry network to ensure the region’s work plan meets the needs of the industry, both current and future.