

Business

# Glynn takes on job to be 'Work Ready'

Designation part of state initiative

By SHANESSA FAKOUR  
The Brunswick News

The statewide initiative to improve the job training skills of Georgia's work force and attract new industries has caught on with several counties, including Glynn, to become certified as Work Ready Communities.

The designation benefits counties by showing their commitment to maintain a skilled workforce and increase high school graduation rates. More than 40 counties, including nearby Ware and Camden counties, have earned the status since Gov. Sonny Perdue introduced the initiative in 2006. Now Glynn County, the largest county in terms of population in the coastal district, has joined the growing group of counties seeking an advantage in the competitive landscape of economic development deals.

Ellen Murphy spearheaded the effort by pulling together a team that involved the economic development authority, chamber of commerce, school board and other community leaders to work together to meet the state requirements by the end of the year. Instead of taking the full three years given to a county to become certified, Glynn chose an 18-month accelerated program and will receive grant money for advertising the initiative.

"I think the more people are informed about Georgia Work Ready, the more they'll realize how important it is for our com-



Nick Nichols/The Brunswick News

Ellen Murphy, center, STAR Foundation director, helps Katinah Walker, left, and LaQuita Gurley, prepare for their Work Ready assessment tests on computers.

munity to grow and compete," said Murphy, director of the Star Foundation, a nonprofit organization that assists low-income, single mothers learn computer, job and life skills. The facility offers two computer rooms for people to take the Work Ready assessment test.

The challenge for the community is to assess a certain number of individuals within various sectors, said Nathan Sparks, executive director of the Brunswick and Glynn County Development Authority.

"We're working toward that objective and making good progress," Sparks said.

So far, the county has met its goals for testing and certifying a certain number of workers in five of the eight sectors, but about half remain to be tested in the private,

government and GED sectors, said Hank Martin, vice president of economic development for Altamaha Technical College. The number of certified people per category is based on a county's population.

"I'm sure the GED's will come down because we've been working on that diligently," Martin said. He said people earning their GED from Golden Isles Career Academy are also being prepared to take the Work Ready assessment test, which assesses a person's skills in math, reading, finding information and their work habits, such as cooperation, discipline and drive. The proctor-administered test is free and takes three hours to complete, but may be broken into one hour intervals.

"We've made it a little easier as

we have offered to go to (their) facilities to do the testing," Martin said, explaining the county's efforts to reach more workers in the private sector.

He said they are targeting school system, county and fire department employees to reach their goal for government sector workers.

Sparks said another challenge is conveying to employers the benefits of having a work ready certified person on their team.

"It's an objective way to make certain (employees) truly can take on the task you're assigning to them," Sparks said.

From a community standpoint, it is a way to promote our work force to industries, he said. "We see it an opportunity to achieve that seal of approval Georgia has indicated as important when working with economic development prospects," Sparks said.

Christine Daniel, president of the Camden County Chamber of Commerce and who led their Work Ready team, said they achieved their status by aligning with the school system to test students to be Work Ready certified, which helped increased their graduation rate seven points. They also explained to businesses the importance of using Work Ready certification as a tool for hiring. This led to the county's two largest employers requiring the certification for new hires.

"What we're doing now is focusing on the importance of having the general work force tested because it helps in turn over," she said. "(Employers) have reduced their turnover rate tremendously because they're hiring the right person for the job on the onset!"

## PORTFOLIO

July 6, 2010

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<b>Standard &amp; Poor's 500</b>	<b>+5.48</b>
1,028.06	
<b>Russell 2000</b>	<b>-8.94</b>
590.03	

### Dow industrials climb 57 to break slide

NEW YORK — The Dow Jones industrial average broke a seven-day slide Tuesday after traders sifted through the market for beaten-down stocks.

Investors tried to recover some of the big losses that piled up following weeks of disappointing economic reports. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 57 points after dropping 7.3 percent over the past two weeks to its lowest level since October. The steep drop drew traders expecting to see the market bounce.

— The Associated Press

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### Honors

#### Gaschler earns hand therapy certification

Jeff Gaschler recently earned specialty certification in hand therapy. Gaschler works as a registered and licensed occupational therapist at the Southeast Georgia Health System and sees outpatients at the Wellness Way Outpatient Rehab. To become a certified hand therapist, Gaschler had to complete at least five years of clinical work, 4,000 hours of hands-on care and pass an exam. Gaschler worked in a hand clinic in Lexington, Ky. before joining the Health System.

#### New employees Lee joins Glynco Immediate Care Center

Dr. James Lee has joined the Glynco Immediate Care Center as a family medicine physician. Lee is board-certified by the American College of Family Practice and a member of the American Medical Association, American College of Family Practice and American Academy of Family Physicians, among others. He earned his medical degree from Midwestern University-Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine. Most recently, he worked as a family medicine physician specializing in urgent care/immediate care and occupational medicine with Sherman Immediate Care in Elgin, Ill.

#### Mitchell joins Glynn Family Medicine Center

Dr. Patsy Mitchell has joined the Glynn Family Medicine Center as a family medicine physician. Mitchell is board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine. She earned her medical degree from Midwestern University-Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine. Most recently, Mitchell practiced as a primary care physician and medical director of the Comprehensive Health Services in Lincolnshire, Ill. She is also a former instructor at the Northwestern

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