

STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR

For Immediate Release
Monday, June 15, 2009

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Four Georgia Counties Reach Certified Work Ready Community Status

Creating Skilled Workforce, Improving Public High School Graduation Rates

ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue today announced that Chattooga, Cook, Grady, and Jenkins counties were named new Certified Work Ready Communities, a designation showing the county has the skilled workforce that business demands and the educational infrastructure to drive economic growth and prosperity.

“These Georgia communities are positioning themselves for strong future growth by building the skilled workforces that employers need,” said Governor Perdue. “Work Ready is helping them build a pathway for life-long learning that empowers both citizens and companies to succeed.”

The four counties represent the fifth group of Georgia counties to complete their Work Ready Certificate goals. The new Certified Work Ready Communities achieved the following:

- Chattooga County: 503 Work Ready Certificates earned (56 percent above goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 70.3 percent to 75.8 percent
- Grady County: 352 Work Ready Certificates earned (22 percent above goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 65.1 percent to 71.4 percent
- Jenkins County: 277 Work Ready Certificates earned (67 percent above goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 63.6 percent to 72.3 percent
- Cook County: 294 Work Ready Certificates earned (34 percent above goal); increased public high school graduation rate from 64.8 percent to 67.6 percent

To earn the Certified Work Ready Community designation, counties must demonstrate a commitment to improving public high school graduation rates through a measurable increase, and show a specified percentage of the available and current workforce have obtained Work Ready Certificates.

Each community created a team of economic development, government and education partners to meet the certification criteria. Counties are given three years to reach the goals necessary to earn the designation.

To date, 12 counties have earned the Certified Work Ready Community designation and 112 others are working toward their individual goals. Once counties attain their Certified Work Ready Community goals, they are able to maintain their status by ensuring a small percent of their available workforce continue to earn Work Ready Certificates, engage local businesses to recognize and use Work Ready, and continue to increase their public high school graduation rate until they reach a threshold of 75 percent. Once they reach 75 percent, they must maintain that graduation rate to maintain their certification status.

To continue their work, each county will receive a \$10,000 grant. Their Work Ready Community teams will also receive a two-year membership to their local chamber of commerce and a budget for additional Work Ready outreach materials. Counties that are fully certified receive road signs and a seal denoting the year they achieved certification.

Georgia's Work Ready initiative is based on a skills assessment and certification for job seekers and a job profiling system for businesses. By identifying both the needs of business and the available skills of Georgia's workforce, the state can more effectively generate the right talent for the right jobs. The Certified Work Ready Community initiative builds on the assessments and job profiling system to create opportunities for greater economic development.

