

Be Pro Be Proud seeks to expand Georgia's technical fields

By **ROBBIE BILLS**
SPORTS EDITOR

An initiative through the Cherokee Office of Economic Development is seeking to enlighten students about need for a skilled workforce.

The Be Pro Be Proud Georgia (BPBPG) campaign travels to high school campuses around the state with a 40-foot rig that serves as a mobile workshop highlighting skilled technical jobs.

BPBPG was at Gilmer High School last Thursday and Friday, and over 150 students got to explore available career paths. BPBPG has spent most of its time in the metro-Atlanta area, and its arrival at GHS marked its first venture to north Georgia.

Gilmer High's work-based learning coordinator Mikella Rutter was introduced to the initiative at the state level. District coordinators were encouraged to get on BPBPG's waiting list, which Rutter said was close to 500.

She did not expect GHS to get the call, but it came last week and the rig was on campus by Thursday.

"We're really excited," Rutter said. "I hope this is something we can do maybe not every year, but maybe bi-annually to come out here and get a new group of kids introduced."

"We've had a real excellent response," Rutter said. "I think a lot of students were genuinely excited to hear about something other than college. We talk about college a lot, which is important, but this is important, too."

BPBPG's operations manager Scott Callaway was on site at GHS and helped start the program four years ago in Arkansas. It has since expanded to South Carolina and arrived in Georgia in 2019.

"This is an effort to get the message to our students all over the state about the skilled workforce, the opportunities, the technical skills needed and how to get certified and get jobs," Callaway said.

"You have a skilled workforce with tons of jobs out there available that don't take a lot to get into but pay really high wages. Why aren't we taking advantage of that?"

There is currently one rig in Georgia. Because the waiting list is growing by the day, plans are to build a second one to reach as many schools as possible. Each rig features 13 skills in the fields of health care, welding, class-A trucking, plumbing and robotics.

"There are five major categories that basically run our country, and they are healthcare, transportation, technology, construction and manufacturing," Callaway said.

"If you have a skill in one of those fields, you have income for the rest of your life. Within those five, you have these 13 different subcategories. We talk in depth about these and how to get certified."

The goal of BPBPG is to get at least 10 percent of students who are exposed to the program to "join the movement," which entails signing up with BPBPG. Students are then given a pathway to reach their job of choice. Currently, 25 percent of students have shown interest after seeing what BPBPG has to offer.

BPBPG is funded through private companies in the aforementioned fields who support its cause.



Gilmer High student Reagan Boling operates a robot last Friday at Be Pro Be Proud Georgia's mobile workshop that seeks to teach students about skilled technical career paths.



Clockwise from above, GHS students examine health care, transportation and welding stations at Be Pro Be Proud Georgia's mobile workshop last week.



USDA to measure financial well-being of southern farmers and ranchers

NASS

In late December, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) began gathering information about farm economics and production practices from farmers and ranchers across the South, as the agency conducts the third and final phase of the 2020 Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS).

"ARMS is the only survey that measures the current financial well-being of Southern producers and their households as a whole," said Anthony Prillaman, director of the NASS Southern Regional

Field Office.

"The results of this survey will help inform decisions on local and federal policies and programs that affect Southern farms and farm families."

In an effort to obtain the most accurate data, NASS will reach out to more than 30,000 producers nationwide, including nearly 4,000 in Alabama, Florida, Georgia and South Carolina combined, between January and March.

The survey asks producers to provide in-depth information about their operating revenues, production costs and household characteristics.

This year the survey includes questions to help

measure any impacts of COVID-19 on farms, farm and household finances, and off-farm employment.

To protect the health of producers, partners and employees, NASS is unable to work with producers in person to complete this survey but will provide support over the phone.

"In late January, our interviewers will begin reaching out to those farmers who have not yet responded," said Prillaman. "We appreciate each producer's time to participate. USDA-NASS is here to help farmers and ranchers with the questionnaire so that their information will continue supporting sound agricultural decision-making."

In addition to producing accurate information, NASS has strong safeguards in place to protect the confidentiality of all farmers who respond to its surveys. The agency will only publish data in an aggregate form, ensuring the confidentiality of all responses and that no individual respondent or operation can be identified.

The expense data gathered in ARMS will be published in the annual Farm Production Expenditures

report July 30, 2021. That report and others are available at nass.usda.gov/Publications. More reports based on ARMS data and more information about ARMS are available at ers.usda.gov/arms.

Eggs set, chicks placed

NASS

Hatcheries in the United States weekly program set 235 million eggs in incubators during the week ending Jan. 9, 2021, down 1 percent from a year ago.

Average hatchability for chicks hatched during the week in the United States was 81.0 percent. Average hatchability is calculated by dividing chicks hatched during the week by eggs set three weeks earlier.

Hatcheries in Alabama set 33.4 million eggs during the week ending Jan. 9, 2021, down 2 percent from a year ago. Hatcheries in Georgia set 34.4 million eggs during the same week, down 2 percent from a year

ago. Broiler growers in the United States weekly program placed 189 million



chicks for meat production during the week ending Jan. 9, 2021, down slightly from a year ago.

Grand Opening

Ellijay the Secret is Out

on Facebook quick link @ellijayga1

www.facebook.com/ellijayga1

SUPPORT ELLIJAY SMALL BUSINESSES

You work hard for every dollar. We work hard for every deduction.

Block has your back.

H&R BLOCK

500 Highland Crossing, Ste. 112, BY SUBWAY
East Ellijay, GA 30540 | 706.635.5538

OBTP#B13696 © 2020 HRB Tax Group, Inc.

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS HOSPICE

ANNUAL VOLUNTEER YARD SALE

February 12 & 13

Friday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. • Saturday, 8 a.m.-noon

Yard sale will be held in the Stencil Room of the Georgia Mountains Hospice Building, 70 Caring Way, Jasper, GA 31043.

Any Donated Items appreciated — NO Clothes Please Wear Masks & Observe Social Distancing

All proceeds will go to support Georgia Mountains Hospice.

For info contact Judy Chance
706-253-4100 1-800-692-7199

Georgia Mountains Hospice is a not-for-profit, 501(c)3 agency, all donations are tax-deductible.