

ACCESS

A Publication of the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce

Teachers' Externship Program Fuses Workforce Needs with Classroom Learning

This past summer, businesses such as NAS Jax, JAXPORT, JEA and Orange Park Medical Center hosted 42 teachers from three of our region's counties (Clay, Duval and St. Johns) as part of an externship program funded by the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce and WorkSource.

The teachers from area career academies, the "schools within schools" producing skilled, motivated graduates for the region's targeted industries, participated in the customized externship program designed to expose instructors to the professional demands and expectations of their area of specialization. The program uses job shadowing and other activities to better their understanding of the current environment and workforce issues within that particular industry; thus, enabling them to teach the skills necessary for high wage, high demand jobs.

"The externships provided an excellent opportunity for teachers to develop new curriculum for the 2009-2010 school year," said Tina Wirth, director of workforce development. "For example, we placed three instructors at NAS Jax so they can get an understanding of the latest and greatest technology and then get together and develop classroom activities that relate to their experiences."

"I was completely impressed by the enthusiasm and eagerness of NAS Jax, JEA and the University of Florida to share

information and provide us with tremendous opportunities to collaborate with them on educational and instructional endeavors," said David Thompson, director of the St. Johns County Aerospace Academy.

Alicia Pressel, a teacher from Creekside High School in St. Johns County, had her externship experience at JEA. "The externship with JEA provided a valuable insight in the detailed processes of energy and water resources and the planning that surrounds our growing community. I strongly feel that the externship was a wonderful and unique opportunity, and I am very excited to share the experience with my students and integrate the externship into my classroom activities."

The teachers are not the only ones that benefit. Many business professionals enjoy connecting with the education community, those preparing their future workforce. "The most successful aspect was allowing the company to see how much work goes into teaching and planning for the students. This was a success all around," said Dana Foppiano, director of Client Services at Medical Management Resources.

"Excellent experience all the way around. I offer the program to contact us anytime. We are very willing to take part in the program again," ACC(AW/SW) Karl R Vliet, NAS Jacksonville ATC.

If your company is interested in participating in a future externship program, contact Monisa Bannamon at (904) 366-6615 or Monisa.Bannamon@myjaxchamber.com.



Top: Jeff Cumber (left) and Pat Carmody (right) with the Engineering Academy at Lee High School join Roger Chubin (middle) of International Flavors and Fragrances on a detailed tour of the facility.

Bottom: John Slate, an instructor with Frank H. Peterson Academies of Technology (right), talks with AC1(AW) Richard Price about how many aircraft he monitors each day at the NAS Jax Air Operations Control Tower.

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