# The CTE Spoilight

Highlighting Career Technical Education in Cocke County Schools

### **BUILDING FUTURES:**

### Grand Opening of the Innovation Center & CTE Middle School

The Cocke County Board of Education proudly welcomed over 250 stakeholders to celebrate the long-anticipated Grand Opening of the district's Innovation Center. Originally scheduled for January 10, the event faced delays due to snowfall, but on Friday, January 17, 2025, the sun made a welcome appearance, shining a light on the momentous occasion.

Bringing this vision to life was no small feat, requiring the dedication and hard work of numerous district personnel. Among those instrumental in the center's development were Cocke County Director of Schools, Manney Moore, and CTE Director, Eric Ellison, along with countless others who played key roles in making this innovative space a reality.



Director of Schools, Manney Moore, and Cocke County Director of Schools, Manney Moore, cuts the ribbon to officially open the Innovation Center, joined by a large crowd of more than 50 stakeholders, including CCBOE district staff and board members, County Mayor making this innovative space a reality.

Cocke County Director of Schools, Manney Moore, cuts the ribbon to officially open the Innovation Center, joined by a large crowd of more than 50 stakeholders, including CCBOE district staff and board members, County Mayor Rob Mathis, state and locally elected representatives, and valued industry partners. All gathered to celebrate this milestone in CTE education.

The Innovation Center is home to a state-of-the-art Career Exploration Center (a.k.a Career Zone) and four CTE classrooms, each designed to provide hands-on, career-focused learning experiences. This facility will serve as a hub for 7th and 8th-grade students, introducing them to foundational CTE programs that align with high school Programs of Study. Students will have the opportunity to explore courses such as Introduction to Agriculture, Introduction to Health Science, and two STEM offerings (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)—all of which pave the way for further study at the high school level.

Mr. Ellison stated, "This is a facility that all of Cocke County can be proud of...with the latest and greatest equipment, it allows us to offer our students opporunities they didn't have in the past."

While the ribbon-cutting marked the official opening, the heart of the center lies in its ability to serve students like never before via its Career Exploration Center—a space designed to ignite students' curiosity and provide hands-on insight into various career fields. Read on to discover more...

Continued on next page....



<-- Remember, this icon notes a CTE term throughout the newsletter.



<--This one will highlight a CTE Industry Partner.



### **Innovation Center continued...**







**Pictured above (right)**, Mr. Ellison and Mayor Mathis warmly welcomed the group of stakeholders **(above left)** who attended the Innovation Center Open House. Then, they encouraged the group to explore/tour the new facilities.

**Pictured directly left**, Mr. Chuck Cody welcomes visitors into his STEM classroom. He explains what students will be doing while in his STEM Designers class.

**Pictured directly right** is one's view upon entry to the new Career Zone. **Pictured below** are students and parents partaking in the hands-on activities described in the article below.



## Step Into the "Zone": Sparking Career Curiosity in Cocke County

At the heart of the Innovation Center is the Career Exploration Center, commonly referred to as the *Career Zone*. This interactive space is designed to introduce students to a variety of career pathways in an engaging and hands-on way. Primarily serving middle-schoolers, the Career Zone will be an integral part to enhance the weekly visits of the 7th-8th graders. Additionally, 6th graders will visit at least once per semester to build on the career exploration work already being presented by their school counselors.

The Career Zone is structured to provide **real-world exposure** to career opportunities through a combination of **technology, hands-on activities, and guided exploration**. At the center of the room, a gathering area serves as a space where students can watch educationally approved videos about career clusters and local programs of study, helping them make informed decisions about their future paths.

Surrounding this central hub are **seven interactive** "pods", each dedicated to a specific career cluster(s) or field of study. These provide students with hands-on, career-related activities that not only spark interest but also help them determine what fields align with their interests and strengths. Career clusters featured include those bulleted to the right:





- Advanced Manufacturing & Coding
- Agriculture
- Construction & Architectural/Engineering Design
- Criminal Justice
- Health Science
- Hospitality & Tourism, Culinary Arts & Nutrition/Diet Science
- Transportation

For any of the 16
Career Clusters not represented directly, students have the opportunity to participate in activities using Virtual Reality goggles/headsets.

### Continued from "Step into the Zone"...

In the Career Exporation Center, each pod is designed to offer detailed insight into its respective career cluster. **Every station features a descriptor plaque** outlining:

- General information about the career cluster
- Related Programs of Study available at the high school level
- · Career opportunities within that field
- A QR code linking to a video featuring a local industry partner, who discusses real-world applications of that career and its significance in today's workforce

By engaging with these stations, students can **test their** abilities, explore their interests, and gain insight into career options they may not have previously considered. Whether it's experimenting with engineering design challenges, learning about medical careers, or exploring the logistics behind transportation and distribution, the Career Zone makes career discovery interactive, engaging, and meaningful.

Moreover, as students continue to explore their options, the Career Zone serves as a foundation for making informed choices about their future educational and career paths—a critical step before transitioning into high school CTE programs.

Adding to the strength and sustainability of the Career Zone, each pod is proudly sponsored by a local business or industry partner (see below). These sponsorships ensure that students have access to updated materials, enhanced learning experiences, and continued opportunities for career exploration for years to come. These businesses not only help support the program financially but also serve as a direct link between students and the local workforce, reinforcing the relevance of these career pathways in Cocke County and beyond.

Up next, we'll take a look at our industry partners and the very first day middle schoolers stepped into the Innovation Center, setting the stage for an exciting new chapter in Cocke County's CTE journey.





In these pictures in the Career Zone, (top left) local community members stand back and take-in all the Career Zone has to offer. (Top right) A high school student and her friend try on the "drunk" goggles as part of the Criminal Justice pod. (Bottom left) A curious toddler and his proud grandmother explored the Agriculture pod together, discovering hands-on activities that sparked wonder across generations. (Bottom right) Director of Schools Manney Moore jumped right into the fun too, carefully trying his hand at checking the pulse of a cow in the interactive Agriculture pod. He missed out on "milking the cow" though!





### **Backing the Next Generation: Meet Our Career Zone Sponsors**



For: Advanced Manufacturing Scott Schroeder, General Manager, Bush Brothers & Co.



For: Health Science George Barton, CEO Rural Medical Services



For: Transportation
Marc Stinnett, Principal Dealer
Stinnett Chevrolet Buick



For: Hospitality/Tourism Management Angela Jenkins, Visitor's Center Cafe Manager, Bush Brothers & Co.



For: Construction Sean Ellison, Owner/CEO, Brockwell Construction



For: Criminal Justice
Sheriff C.J. Ball, Cocke Co. Sheriff's Office



For: Agriculture Cory Malone, Branch Manager, Smoky Mountain Farmer's Co-Op

# Pathways Begin Here: Middle School CTE Launches at the Innovation Center

On January 6, 2025, for the first time, middle school students stepped through the doors of the Cocke County Innovation Center (IC) to embark on hands-on Career and Technical Education (CTE) explorations - and ultimately "go to class." Parrottsville Elementary School's 7th graders led the way, arriving with excitement and curiosity. They were warmly welcomed by the middle school CTE teachers and CTE Director Eric Ellison, who were ready to guide them into this new experience.

For the remainder of the school year, all 7th and 8th graders from Cocke County's elementary schools will have the opportunity to attend classes at the IC for approximately three hours each week. Despite a short delay due to snow-related school closures, the program is now in full swing, with all district elementary schools following Parrottsville's lead

The courses offered include Introduction to Agriculture, Introduction to Health Science, and STEM. These exploratory classes are designed to help students identify their interests, build confidence, and develop a foundational understanding of various career pathways available to them through CTE programs in high school.

Bringing middle school students into the IC not only aids in their transition to high school but also provides valuable early exposure to career options they might not have previously considered. Whether they're intrigued by working with animals, fascinated by the medical field, or love solving problems with technology, this program helps them discover where their passions might lead.

Looking ahead, 6th graders will also have the opportunity to experience the Innovation Center toward the end of the school year. During their visit, they will explore the Career Zone and register for their CTE courses for the upcoming year, further integrating career exploration into their educational journey.

The Cocke County Innovation Center continues to grow into a hub of inspiration and career discovery, and this latest addition — welcoming middle school students into the space — is a significant step toward preparing students for their future.







### From Vision to Reality: Thanking Those Who Made It Possible

As the Career and Technical Education Director for Cocke County Schools, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to making the Cocke County Innovation Center a reality. From the initial vision to the welcoming of our first students, this achievement is the result of the dedication and collaboration of numerous individuals and organizations.

To the builders and contractors who transformed a former retail space into a state-of-the-art educational facility, your craftsmanship and attention to detail have created an environment where our students can thrive. Special thanks to Lewis Group Architects for their innovative design and commitment to our project.

To our educators, administrators, parents, and community partners, your unwavering support and belief in the importance of career and technical education have been instrumental in bringing this center to life.

The Cocke County Innovation Center stands as a testament to what we can achieve when we come together with a shared vision. It promises to be a beacon of opportunity, inspiring and preparing our students for the diverse careers that await them, and enriching our community for years to come.

Sincerely,

Eric Ellison

## RECIAL SPOTLIGHTS

## Connecting Classrooms to Careers: Meet Paula Bearden, Our New WBL Coordinator

We are excited to welcome Ms. Paula Bearden as the new **Work-Based Learning Coordinator** for the Cocke County School System, serving students at both Cocke County High School and Cosby High School. With 32 years of teaching experience, including her extensive tenure at CCHS as the CTE Nursing Services teacher, Paula brings a wealth of knowledge and a passion for student success to her new role.

Originally from Belle Glade, Florida, and now residing in Del Rio, Tennessee, Paula is no stranger to hard work and dedication. She holds a B.S. in Nursing and a Master of Science degree, both from prestigious institutions like East Tennessee State University and the University of Tennessee. Paula has always enjoyed engaging with high school students and believes in the power of hands-on learning. One Bábla's antihlusias macforolière wiolki is includenting helpersonals mottoir! If no class room and out in the field at work sites.

are not moving forward, you are already backing up." This forward-thinking mindset is something she hopes to instill in all her students, encouraging them to be job-ready and productive members of society by the end of the school year.

When not teaching, Paula enjoys spending time with her pets—cats, dogs, and horses—and has a deep love for traveling, particularly to explore the American West.

As the new Work-Based Learning Coordinator, Paula is eager to connect with students and help guide them toward career success. You can find her in the Ben Hooper CTE building, in the CTE Administration office. Feel free to reach out to her at 423-623-6072 if you have any questions about the Work-Based Learning program.



Welcome back Ms. Paula Bearden!!



### Cosby High School Senior Kara Shults Recognized by Governor Bill Lee for Outstanding Volunteerism





2024 Volunteer Star Award Recipients:

Pictured above: CHS Senior, Kara Shults Pictured left: Mrs. Michelle Lane, CHS CTE Hospitality/ Tourism teacher currently on leave.. Cosby High School senior Kara Shults has been honored as the 2024 Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards youth recipient for Cocke County, recognized for her exceptional dedication to service and her commitment to bettering her community. Kara was celebrated alongside other distinguished volunteers from across the state at a special ceremony held February 16th at the Franklin Marriott Cool Springs in Franklin, Tennessee.

Annually, Governor Bill Lee's commission on volunteerism and community service—Volunteer Tennessee—selects one youth and one adult from each county to receive this prestigious award. The recognition not only celebrates those who go above and beyond to serve others but also shines a light on the powerful impact of volunteerism in Tennessee communities. In total, 62 adults, 53 youth, three businesses, and three nonprofits were honored during the event.

Kara's selection as Cocke County's youth honoree speaks volumes about her leadership, compassion, and unwavering dedication to service. Whether volunteering at local events, supporting school initiatives, or serving in her community in countless other ways, Kara exemplifies what it means to have a true "Volunteer heart."

She was joined in recognition by Mrs. Michelle Lane, a Cosby High School CTE teacher who was named the adult honoree from Cocke County. Although currently on leave to assist with Hurricane Helene recovery efforts, Mrs. Lane's continued service on both the local and national level made her a natural choice for this honor. Together, Kara and Mrs. Lane represent the best of Cosby High School and Cocke County—demonstrating a shared commitment to making a difference.

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## The Future Starts Now!! - Opening our Doors to 8th Graders -

Spring is one of the busiest times of year for 8th grade students as they begin preparing for high school registration. With new choices to make—from academic courses to career and technical programs—it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the decisions ahead.

To help ease those anxieties and support students through the transition, both Cosby High School and Cocke County High School hosted special events to welcome their future freshmen. Eighth graders from across the district had the opportunity to tour their respective high schools, explore Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, and meet the teachers and staff who will help guide them over the next four years. From hands-on learning spaces to one-on-one conversations with educators, these visits gave students a valuable first glimpse into the academic and career pathways available to them.

Here's a look at how each school made the experience both informative and inspiring for the Class of 2029.

### Students Explore Career Programs and Connect with CTE Ambassadors

On Tuesday, February 25, Cocke County High School opened its doors to 8th grade students from across the county for a special visit day designed to help ease the transition from middle school to high school. As part of their visit, students toured the Ben W. Hooper CTE Center to get an up-close look at the wide range of Career and Technical Education programs available to them.

Just a few weeks later, on Thursday, March 13, Cosby High School hosted its Rising Freshmen Night, offering its incoming students a similar opportunity to explore the school and learn more about the programs and experiences that await them. Students and their families toured the building, met teachers and staff, and spent time in the CTE program areas, such as Mrs. Hurst's Therapuetic Services classroom—getting a preview of hands-on learning opportunities in health science.

Helping to lead the way at CHS were CTE Student Ambassadors Alannta Ball and Tabaya Spencer. They shared about their own high school journeys, and offered insight into what students can expect from CTE courses at CHS.

While at CCHS, 8th grade students were welcomed at the CTE Center by Crystal McGaha, Cocke County's CTE Career Counselor, who made introductions and set the tone for the visit. Each group of students was then paired with CTE Student Ambassadors who guided them through the building and shared insights about the different programs.

Among the many stops on the tour, one area that stood out was the **newly developed Hospitality and Tourism Management room** which









These pics show CTE Student Ambassadors in action. Pictured top left, Tabaya Spencer, Nursing Services student, helped CTE Teacher Kim Hurst discuss the health programs available in high school. (Top right) CCHS Machining Technology student, Justin Ramsey, assisted Mr. Webb to showcase program. (Bottom left) Students experienced the new Hospitality/Tourism room at CCHS. (Bottom right) CTE Student Ambassadors Ziyanna Carr and Emma Blair lead a group of visting 8th graders.

comes complete with a mock restaurant and hotel front desk, offering the students a hands-on glimpse into the world of customer service and hospitality—and quickly became a favorite among visitors.

CCHS Student Ambassadors who helped lead tours included Emma Blair, Mia Budiraharja, Ziyanna Carr, Kaylee Gilliland, and Justin Ramsey. Their leadership and willingness to share personal experiences played a big role in making the day welcoming and informative.

Both of these high school events gave 8th grade students a valuable opportunity to explore potential career paths, meet future teachers and mentors, and start picturing themselves as high school students.

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### Reports from our CTSOs...

### CTE Students in Action: CTSOs Ready to Shine This Spring

Spring is a busy and exciting season for our Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs)! From setting up eye-catching booths at 8th grade club fairs to help recruit future members, to putting in extra hours honing their skills for upcoming state conference competitions, our students are fully engaged. This time of year showcases the dedication, leadership, and talent found in each CTSO as they balance outreach, preparation, and teamwork—all while representing their CTE programs with pride.

### Look for results from any STATE Competitions to be in the last issue!

CTSO stands for Career and Technical Student Organizations. These are student-led organizations in the United States that are specifically focused on career and technical education (CTE) fields. These organizations provide students with opportunities for leadership development, career exploration, and skill-building activities related to various vocational fields.

### TURNING UP THE HEAT: FCCLA IN ACTION

FCCLA sponsors Ashley Dudley (pictured left) and Rebekah Fisher (pictured below) have been busy this spring, dedicating their time and energy-even outside regular school hours-to

> help students prepare for the FCCLA State Competition. Their hard work and support behind the scenes haven't gone unnoticed! (Look for results and pictures from state in the next issue.)

In addition to gearing up for competition, FCCLA members have also been actively involved in representing their club. Here, Gracelyn Davis and Emma Arrowood took part in the 8th Grade Visit Day Club Fair, proudly sharing what FCCLA is all about with incoming high schoolers.



focusing on the multiple roles of being a family member, wage

earner, and community leader.





Students in Mrs. Rebekah Fisher's Hospitality and Tourism Management I class recently had a fiery visit—from the Newport Fire **Department!** Firefighters Jonas Clevenger, Amanda Keller, and Barry Nease stopped by to teach students about the importance of kitchen fire safety.

Pictured left, Firefighter Clevenger demonstrates the proper way to use a fire extinguisher to student Manan Patel. In the photo below, Jeferson Cervellon Sanchez gets first-hand experience putting out a

> Thank you to the City of Newport Fire Department for providing this valuable and hands-on safety lesson! It was both educational and engaging, not to mention, practical.

### **Leadership in Bloom:**

Click below to see us on FB: CHS FFA

### Cocke Co. FFA Chapters Head into Spring with Purpose

Spring is the busiest time of year for both FFA chapters at Cocke County High School (CCHS) and Cosby High School (CHS)! From preparing for regional competitions that lead up to the highly anticipated state conference (be on the lookout for pictures and results in our next issue!) to one of their biggest commitments—greenhouse season—our FFA members are hard at work. The process begins early in the term, when students plant and nurture seedlings in chilly conditions, requiring extra attention and care. By April, those efforts bloom into full-fledged spring plant sales for the community. It's a lot to juggle, but as always, our FFA groups (with the help of their sponsors-Mrs. Noe, Ms. Burns, & Mrs. Perry) "get'r'done!"

### FFA Week Activities Dampened by Snow Closure

National FFA Week in Tennessee took place from February 15-22, and CCHS FFA sponsors Ms. Burns and Mrs. Perry had an exciting lineup of events planned for the entire student body. The week was set to feature special dress-up days, a fun breakfast to kick things off *(see picture below)*, and a campus-wide scavenger hunt where students could find hidden ducks and win prizes. The grand finale was a Black Light Party on Friday night.



While the events were designed to get the whole school involved, Mother Nature had other plans—schools were only in session on Monday that week due to weather closures. But, as we do in the spring term, we pivoted. Events were streamlined, and the party was rescheduled for a later date. We're hopeful that next year, the weather will be more cooperative, and we can enjoy all the festivities as planned for FFA Week.



### **FFA Showing Out Locally and Gearing UP for STATE**

The 3rd nine-weeks is an exciting period filled with regional and district competitions as students gear up for State.

While they may not all be pictured here, we are incredibly proud of all our participating CTE students who are showcasing their talents and dedication.

In January, there was "snow" stopping us from competing at the FFA District competitions!

Despite the wintry weather, CCHS FFA members pushed through and came out on top with several impressive wins. Congratulations to the following District Proficiency winners from CCHS:

- Extemporaneous- Emma Blair 1st place
- Employment Skills- Nate Mason 1st place
- Creed- Kalli Crowder 1st place

CCHS senior Emma Blair tends to the plants in the greenhouse with the same care and dedication that earned her the title of **Eastern Regional Champion in Diversified Horticulture** this January.

Other SAE CCHS notables were Nat

Other SAE CCHS notables were Nate Mason for Agriscience-Animal Systems and CCHS Class of 2024 graduate, Ely Smith for Forage Production

Mrs. Noe, CHS Horticulture teacher and FFA sponsor, lit up Facebook this past quarter with posts celebrating the hard work and accomplishments of her students—both in and out of the classroom.

One standout was CHS senior Alee Leatherwood, who earned several well-deserved shoutouts. In January, Alee placed 3rd in the FFA Extemporaneous Speaking CDE at the district level and went on to place 4th at sub-regionals.

Just a few weeks later, she took 1st place in the Regional Ag Sales Proficiency competition an especially meaningful win, as Alee runs her own business selling produce and floral

arrangements. This summer, she plans to open a physical storeer the growing business.

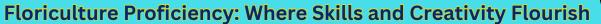


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The National FFA
Organization, or FFA
(originially, Future
Farmers of America),
is a youth
organization that
prepares students
for leadership and
careers in
agriculture.



## In Full Bloom: Spring Prep & Proficiency



Floriculture is the art and science of growing, designing, and marketing flowers and ornamental plants. It's a branch of horticulture that combines plant care knowledge with creativity, as students learn everything from greenhouse management and propagation to floral design and sales techniques.

In FFA, Floriculture Proficiency allows students to demonstrate the skills they've gained through hands-on experience, whether working in school greenhouses or at local florists and nurseries. It's a chance to showcase both their technical abilities and their growth as young professionals.

Take a look at the budding talent from our local FFA chapters! The Floriculture teams at both Cocke County High School (CCHS) and Cosby High School (CHS) have been hard at work, and the photos here capture just a glimpse of their dedication, teamwork, and blooming success.

Pictured to the right: (Top left) The CHS team recieved 5<sup>th</sup> place out of 18 teams at the Regional Floriculture Contest. Their team consisted of Kara Shults, Alee Leatherwood, Ariela Holt, and Elsie Ford. Alee (far right) received 1<sup>st</sup> place out of 77 individuals. Directly right, the CCHS team of Maci McCallister, Olivia Lewis, Mackenzie Carias, and Nate Mason received 2<sup>nd</sup> place and overall Regional Runners-up.



### Partnerships are Blossoming!



A big thank you to
Flowers by Wilma for
partnering with the
CCHS Floriculture
team! Industry
partnerships like this
play a vital role in
helping our FFA
students succeed in
and out of competition.
We're grateful for your
continued
encouragement and
collaboration!

### Student-Grown, Spring-Ready!





Agriculture students at both CCHS and CHS have been hard at work in their greenhouses, preparing for the annual spring plant sales. From seed to sprout, students have been learning valuable hands-on skills while growing a wide variety of flowers and vegetables. With sales opening this month, their hard work is about to pay off—just in time for planting season! Check the last page of this newsletter for details.

### MCCALLISTER EARNS GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL SPOT

CCHS junior Maci McCallister has been selected to attend the <u>Tennessee Governor's School for Agricultural Sciences</u> this summer—a prestigious opportunity for rising high school junior and seniors across the state.

Maci will spend June 2–28 on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin, where she'll dive into hands-on agricultural experiences, earn college credit, and connect with students and professionals who share her passion for the field. Congratulations to Maci on this incredible

achievement!

### Middle School Ag Program Is "Sprouting" Too!

Meanwhile at the Innovation Center, middle school agriculture students have been diving into hands-on learning with their classroom hydroponic systems. By growing plants without soil, they're exploring modern, sustainable methods of agriculture right from their desks!

Also, excitement is growing in more ways than one. Ag teacher, Ms. Culbert is proud to announce the launch of the brand-new middle school FFA chapter. Stay tuned for more details about it in our next issue!



### All Smiles and Scrubs: Cosby HOSA Prepares for State Competition



Here's a proud moment for High-pictured are members of the school's HOSA chapter alongside their sponsor, CTE Therapeutic Services teacher Mrs. Kim Hurst. While all members are shown, students planning to compete at the State HOSA Convention include Ariela Holt, Ansley Cobble, Tabaya Spencer, Claire Holt, and Anastasia Laws.

Be sure to check out the next issue for news and highlights from the big event for both high schools!

HOSA, or Health Occupations Students of America, is a national organization focused on preparing students careers in healthcare. HOSA provides hands-on learning, leadership training, and competitive events in fields like medical terminology,

nursing, and public health.



### **FUTURE HOSA MEMBERS START STRONG AT CTE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

At the CTE Middle School, potential future HOSA members have been laying the foundation for their health science careers. Under the guidance of Dr. Anderson, these students have been busy learning valuable skills involving splinting, understanding range of motion, etc. These hands-on activities are helping them build confidence and understanding in essential medical practices at an early age.

In addition to these practical skills, the students are continually strengthening their medical terminology, ensuring they are well-prepared for the terminology-heavy programs they'll encounter in the future. These early lessons are setting them up for success as they continue their journey into high school HOSA programs and beyond!

### **Polishing Professional Skills:** Handshakes, Interviews, and Networking



**Jobs for America's** Graduates (JAG) is a national nonprofit program that helps students facing barriers to graduation and employment by providing career readiness training, leadership development, and job placement support.





Cocke County High School's JAG (Jobs for America's Graduates) students are gaining valuable career skills to help them succeed beyond the classroom.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> nine-weeks, students learned the importance of a professional handshake-practicing with Assistant Principal Steve Hasselbusch while making eye contact and showing confidence. A strong handshake helps set the tone for interviews and first impressions.

In class, students have also been preparing for the job market through mock interviews. Practicing how to present themselves and answer questions is building confidence for future job opportunities.

JAG students Arian Thompson and Edna Santiago-Lopez attended the Career Development Conference in Murfreesboro March 5-7. Arian placed 3rd statewide in the public speaking event, while Edna, the JAG State President, visited the Tennessee State Capitol and met Governor Bill

From firm handshakes to leadership roles, these students are preparing to stand out in the professional world.

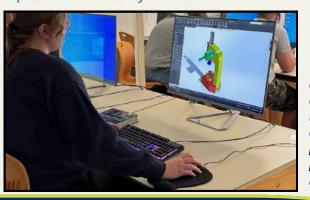
### Weathering the Storm: SkillsUSA Students Ready for Chattanooga

SkillsUSA chapters at both Cosby High School and Cocke County High School are gearing up for the upcoming SkillsUSA Tennessee State Leadership and Skills Conference, happening this week Chattanooga. After months of preparation, students are ready to showcase their talents, leadership, and technical skills on a state stage.

The 3rd nine-weeks presented plenty of obstacles though, with frequent school closures due to winter weather making it difficult to keep up with competition prep. But students and advisors stayed committed-making up lost time and continuing to push forward with dedication and grit.

One of those students is CCHS senior Kaylee Gilliland, pictured here to the right is hard at work preparing for the Technical Drafting competition. Kaylee is a standout student in Mr. Hodges's Architectural and Engineering Design program. Her attention to detail, design skills, and strong work ethic make her a strong contender at this year's conference.

Competitors from both high schools will represent a wide range of CTE pathways, including (but not limited to) Industrial Maintenance Technology, Construction, Automotive Collision Repair, Welding, and Machining - just to name a few. The SkillsUSA State Conference gives students an incredible opportunity to test their skills, connect with industry professionals, and represent Cocke County on a statewide level.





technical fields.



Best of luck to all of our SkillsUSA competitors, like Kaylee—we're proud of the hard work, passion, and perseverance you all have shown this year!

#### Interested in joining SkillsUSA? Speak to a CTE teacher in any of these programs:

At Cocke Co. High School: Architecture & Engineering Design, Automotive Collision Repair, Automotive Maintenance, Coding, Criminal Justice & Correctional Services, Culinary Arts, Industrial Maintenance Technology, Machining Technology, Residential & Commercial Construction, and/or Welding.

At Cosby High School: Criminal Justice & Correctional Services, Hospitality & Tourism Management, and/or Industrial Maintenance Techology.

### Don't Miss this Summer Opportunity:

WaterWORCs 2025 - A Perfect Fit for CCHS and Cosby Students!

Are you a CCHS or Cosby High School student looking to earn money, build career skills, and stand out for opportunities like SkillsUSA? The WaterWORCs TN 2025 summer internship is made for you!

This paid internship is an incredible opportunity for students interested in hands-on, technical careers especially those Environmental Maintenance, Ag Mechanics, STEM, and Public Safety. You'll gain experience in the drinking water and wastewater industry while learning directly from professionals in the field.



#### What You'll Get:

- \$15/hour pay | 40 hours/week
- Internship runs June 2 August 8, 2025
- All uniforms and safety gear provided
- Weekly classroom-style instruction on treatment processes, workplace safety, and industry careers
- Mentorship from water utility professionals
- Excellent resume experience and SkillsUSA project potential!

#### Who Can Apply:

- Students 16 years or older by June 2, 2025
- Must have completed at least sophomore year by this summer
- Have not worked full-time for more than 12 straight months
- Able to report in person to Newport Utilities (NU) in Cocke County

#### Special Notes for Newport Utilities Placement (Cocke County):

- · Must have a valid driver's license
- Must have hepatitis C vaccination to work in the wastewater

### How to Apply: Visit the WaterWORCs website:

### tnwaterta.sites.utk.edu/our-work/waterworcs

Questions? Reach out via email: waterworc@gmail.com Or stop by to see Mrs. Crystal McGaha, CTE Career Counselor, for help getting started!



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### Don't Miss Our Greenhouse **Grand Openings!**

Spring is blooming, and so are the greenhouses at our high schools! 🕏 Cosby High School has already kicked off its Greenhouse Grand Opening and Plant Sale, and things are in full swing! Stop by CHS during school hours until May 16th to browse a great selection of flowers, vegetables, herbs, and hanging baskets grown by our agriculture students.

Cocke County High School will host its Greenhouse Grand Opening this coming Saturday, April 19th, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the greenhouse located behind the Ben Hooper CTE Building. Highlights of the day at CCHS will include:

COCKE COUNTY FFA SILENT AUSTION COCKE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

AGRICULTURE SHOP 210 HEDRICK DRIVE NEWPORT, TN 37821

> APRIL IPTI 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM



- A Silent Auction (see poster to the left)
- 🌞 A wide selection of plants and produce for sale
- **©** Games and activities for kids and families
- Food trucks and concessions available
- Tours of the greenhouse and ag facilities

### COCKE COUNTY FFA Green/honse Grand Opening

**APRIL 19TH, 2025** 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

### EVENTS

- SILENT AUCTION 1:00-3:00PM
- HUGE SELECTION OF PLANTS FOR SALE
- FACE PAINTING/GAMES FOR CHILDREN

- PHAT PATTYS FOOD TRUCK
- KELLI'S KOOL TREATS
- BLESSED & FLAVORED



### SIGN-UP FOR THESE SUMMER CAMPS...









### Missed Our Previous Issues??

Click on the banner below to view them.

Highlighting Career Technical Educ

### ATTENTION: 9th & 10th graders:

Are you interested in earning an Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction for graduation? If so, you MUST be registered before May 1st of your sophomore (10th grade) school year.

CLICK **HERE** for more information.



End-Of-Year Issue coming June 2025!!

Boy, do we have some news for you!!



If you enjoyed this **The CTE Spotlight** and would like to stay informed about CTE activities/events within the Cocke County School System, click the button.

