

Hot Plans for the Summer

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As residents of Santa Rosa County, we are all always prepared for a super hot summer on the Gulf Coast. While the students are out playing this summer, planning for the upcoming school year and beyond is heating up too. In an effort to better prepare our students, not only for college right after graduation, but also to enter the workforce, TEAM Santa Rosa has partnered with the Santa Rosa School District. To enhance existing Career and Technical Education programs, we have begun to work on a comprehensive strategic plan for Santa Rosa County that will further enable our community to meet the ever changing needs of industry. Effective economic development relies heavily on a well-established sustainable workforce. It is our job to know what industries are looking for in terms of the labor force and to work with local entities to shore up our arsenal. If there is no employment base in Santa Rosa County for a particular industry, we don't have a chance at bringing them here.

Santa Rosa County targets the industries of human performance, aviation and defense, logistics, renewable industry, and information technology. When TEAM recruits one of these industries, either to expand or locate to Santa Rosa County, the most common concern is, "Does Santa Rosa County have a substantial workforce to draw from?" While college degrees are important, and in some industries required, the trend shows us that more and more businesses are hiring people with industry certifications.

So how do we prepare our students to enter the workforce with a certification in their field? The answer is Career and Technical Education (CTE). CTE offers students a marketable skill to use within the local industry workforce. Industry is looking for certifications like HVAC, NCCER, or Autocad to name a few. These globally recognized certifications are in demand by employers across Santa Rosa County. We recognize that the job market is becoming progressively competitive. In these tough economic times, Santa Rosa County is all about keeping it local. We want our industries to hire our residents, this is why we are working to provide potential employers with a skilled workforce to hire from- retaining our local talent in Santa Rosa County.

TEAM understands that Career and Technical Education is the wave of future. Career Academies reduce absenteeism and dropout rates; all while motivating students to be in school. We want students being exposed to career possibilities they may not have before considered. While 84% of high school students say, "I'm going to college" only 18% actually earn a college degree. This alarming statistic is proof that a mechanism is needed to prepare students for the workforce and college.

The success of Career and Technical Education depends heavily on support from community partnerships. TEAM is proud to collaborate with the Santa Rosa School District, as well as existing industry, to ensure a sustainable workforce and long term economic success of our community. Together, we can enhance the future of our youth and of our beautiful community, making the workforce here an even hotter commodity than a gorgeous June afternoon on Navarre Beach.