

FORGE



2023 IMPACT REPORT



Visit Our Website
forgeyourpath.org



Empowering Progress:

A Message from the Executive Director



As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude and pride in what we have accomplished together.

The impact of our programs and initiatives has reached new heights, touching the lives of individuals throughout the Golden Triangle Region and beyond. From our Career Expo being recognized by the Governor as the 2023 Workforce Program of the Year to witnessing significant growth in all sectors is a testament to the dedication of our team and the support we receive from each one of you.



I want to express my deepest appreciation to our members, volunteers, donors, and community partners who have played a crucial role in our journey. Your belief in the mission of FORGE is the driving force behind our impact, and together, we will continue to build a brighter future.

With heartfelt gratitude,



Melinda Lowe
FORGE Executive Director





Our Mission

FORGE is an alliance of community-minded small businesses collaborating with educators to attract talented and skilled employees. Our mission is to empower students to carve out their unique paths by leveraging the wealth of workforce training opportunities available within our local communities.



Our Vision

FORGE envisions a future where every student across Mississippi possesses the opportunity and confidence to forge their own prosperous career path. Collaborating closely with small businesses and educators, our goal is to seamlessly connect students at every stage of their academic journey with a wealth of workforce training options.

We are dedicated to expanding our impact as FORGE, a cohesive alliance of multi-generational, locally owned small businesses with a shared commitment to fostering a sustainable and skilled construction workforce pipeline.

As we advance, our steadfast dedication is to strengthen and foster partnerships, engaging every facet of the education pipeline in our extensive workforce initiative. FORGE aims to serve as a catalyst for positive change, equipping students with essential knowledge and fostering the confidence necessary to navigate the path from education to successful careers.

Ultimately, our vision is to stand as a beacon of inspiration and empowerment, actively contributing to the educational and professional growth of Mississippi's future workforce. We aim to be at the forefront of constructing vibrant communities through dynamic collaborations.



FORGE Interview Day

9
SCHOOLS

5
COUNTIES

425
STUDENTS

55
INTERVIEWERS

36
VOLUNTEERS

This annual event played a pivotal role in our commitment to preparing Career and Technology Center students for their future career paths. Industry professionals, spanning construction, industrial maintenance, welding, health, auto, law, business/marketing, culinary, robotics/engineering, and more, contributed invaluable input and industry perspective while connecting with emerging talent in our community.



Little HANDS BIG TRUCKS

Our FORGE members had a fantastic time setting up trucks and heavy equipment for the 2023 Little Hands Big Trucks event, creating an awe-inspiring experience for over 500 enthusiastic children. It was a day filled with smiles, excitement, and the joy of sparking young imaginations!



OCTOBER

CAREERS IN CONSTRUCTION MONTH

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Careers in Construction Month is an annual month designated to increase public awareness and appreciation of construction craft professionals and the entire construction workforce; and

WHEREAS, during this month, employers, associations, and schools are encouraged to conduct job fairs, panel discussions, and local community events to inform students of the vast employment opportunities in construction; and

WHEREAS, the construction industry is one of our nation's largest industries, employing more than 5 million individuals in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the construction industry needs 1.9 million new craft professionals by 2025; and

WHEREAS, we are pleased to honor the construction craft professionals and the critical role they play in the development of the state of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for Construction Education and Research ("NCCER") was created by the construction industry to standardize training and enhance the industry image by promoting the hard work and dedication of our nation's craft professionals; and

WHEREAS, the mission of NCCER's *Build Your Future* initiative is to narrow the skills gap by guiding America's youth and displaced workers into opportunities that lead to long-term rewarding careers in construction; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the *Build Your Future* initiative is to shift the public's negative perception about careers in the construction industry and provide a path for individuals to become craft professionals; and

WHEREAS, AccelerateMS values the contributions of the highly skilled individuals who build our communities, recognizes that construction is a vital part of the state's economy, and is committed to establishing career pathways between construction education and the needs of business and industry in order to create a pipeline of trained construction professionals who can continue to support Mississippi's infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, NCCER, Mississippi Construction Education Foundation, and the FORGE Foundation are partnering with *Build Your Future* in Mississippi to support its mission and goals to encourage long-term rewarding careers in construction.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tate Reeves, Governor of the State of Mississippi, do hereby proclaim October 2023 as

CAREERS IN CONSTRUCTION MONTH

in the State of Mississippi, and I ask all citizens to join me in this special observance.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Jackson, on the 13th day of September in the year of our Lord, two thousand and twenty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and forty-eighth.

Tate Reeves
TATE REEVES
GOVERNOR



BUILD YOUR FUTURE



FORGE Your Path Career Expo



28
Schools



11
Counties



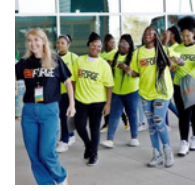
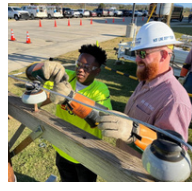
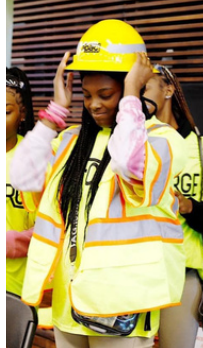
2144
Students



319
Volunteers



5680+
Volunteer
Hours



47
Interactive Booths



\$5M
in Equipment

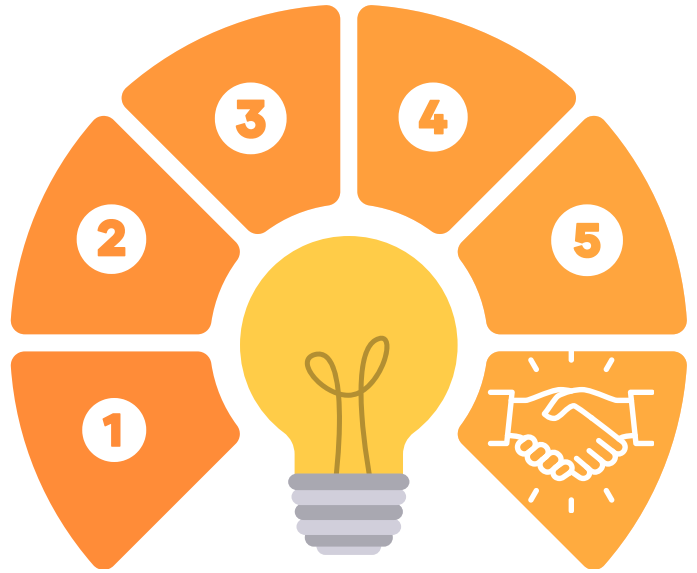


17
Sponsors



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1 Columbus HS Fall Industry Night



2 Educators Are Essential Conference

3 GTR College and Career Fair at The Waters



Join us for...

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Tuesday, October 24th
5:00 - 7:00pm

HOSTED BY:
FORGE
EMCC Community

COLUMBUS LOWNDES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Your Business. Our Focus.

WALS LEE
MITCHELL DISTRIBUTING
LION X HILLS
EAST MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FORGE



4 Excel By 5 Health and Safety Resource Fair



5 Story Time at the Library with Mother Goose



BOOK BUNDLES & COLORING BOOKS

Construction-themed books and FORGE coloring books found their way into the hands of eager learners in 10 elementary schools across Clay, Lowndes, and Oktibbeha counties.



Henderson Ward Stewart Elementary



East Side Elementary



West Clay Elementry



West Lowndes Elementary



GRANT APPLICATIONS supporting 2023 and 2024 programming



In 2023, we actively pursued funding opportunities through grant applications, submitting a total of 13 grants amounting to \$144,100. Out of these, six grants secured full funding, contributing a total of \$31,000 to support our initiatives. Additionally, three grants received partial funding, totaling \$11,000 out of the requested \$22,100. Unfortunately, one grant application for \$5,000 was not successful. Looking ahead, we anticipate potential support as three grants totaling \$86,000 are pending announcement, with the outcomes expected in 2024.

COMING SOON



SPONSORSHIP MENU

Transitioning from individual event sponsorships to an annual sponsorship program signifies a strategic shift towards long-term, sustained support. This evolution allows for more comprehensive and continuous engagement with sponsors, fostering enduring partnerships. Instead of focusing solely on specific events, an annual sponsorship program offers sponsors ongoing visibility and involvement throughout the year. This approach provides stability and predictability, benefiting both the organization and sponsors in terms of planning and impact. It's a step towards building lasting relationships and ensuring sustained support for your initiatives.

FORGE INTERVIEW DAY

February 22, 2024
8:00 AM – 3:00 PM
EMCC Communiversity



11 SCHOOLS



8 COUNTIES



500+ STUDENTS



100+ INTERVIEWERS



SAVE THE DATE

FORGE AHEAD; CONSTRUCTION LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

FEBRUARY 23, 2024
5:30 PM

WALLY
ADAMCHIK
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

