

ADC...continued from Page 1A

our finished goods and stock that we hold for our customers, and we're going to start installing equipment here to increase the size of cables that we can produce."

The \$15 million expansion received

considerable news coverage after Gov. Nathan Deal announced the development in July 2017, and ADC held a groundbreaking at the site of the new building in August of last year.

Construction took about

six months and wrapped at the end of February, and the March 19 ribbon cutting sponsored by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce brought together many of the stakeholders who have helped to foster ADC's growth in Union County.

Speakers during the event included father and



Photo by Shawn Jarrard

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting on Monday, March 19, to help ADC celebrate its recent expansion.

son duo Steve and Cory Payne, owners of Advanced Digital Cable; Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris; Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley; Chamber Membership Coordinator Dawn Saraney; and Union County Development Authority Executive Director Mitch Griggs.

"Projects like this don't happen on their own," said Griggs. "It's said that creation is an act of will – economic development is an act of willing partners, and there's certainly been a lot of people that have been involved with this."

Griggs recognized many that morning, including the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, which assisted the development authority in securing a \$200,000 OneGeorgia Authority equity grant to improve roadway and drainage infrastructure at the site.

"We're glad to be a part of the Blairsville community," said ADC President Steve Payne. "The development authority has been great to work with, they've helped us every step of the way."

Advanced Digital Cable has been working to organize its product lines by facility, and increased infrastructure was the next logical step for a company that is fast becoming an industry leader.

"We're expanding the

Hayesville operation this year," said Steve Payne of company headquarters in North Carolina. "The Hayesville plant is going to be expanded by roughly 55,000 square feet, and we've opened the Hiwassee facility this year."

Following the ribbon cutting and reception, ADC Human Resources Director Joseph Goble led guests on a tour of the facility.

"They pay 100 percent of full-time employees' health insurance," said Goble of Advanced Digital Cable. "How many people do you know in this area that would be able to say that with 151 employees?"

"Not only that, we match 50 percent of the first 6 percent on our employees' 401(k) retirement accounts, and also contribute to full-time employees' health savings accounts. That's another huge thing."

"How about bonuses? We do a profit-sharing bonus for every single one of our employees every quarter. So, if you work 550 hours in your first three months, you have the ability to get a \$550 bonus. These are the types of things that they do for our employees."

Goble added that ADC is always hiring, and interested individuals can find job applications in the main office of the Blairsville facility.

Special guests in attendance for the expansion

ribbon cutting program were Scott Cooper, Regional Economic Development Consultant for TVA; Kathy Papa, Region 2 Representative with DCA; Anna Hensley, executive director of the OneGeorgia Authority at DCA; Joel Katz, Deputy Chief of Staff for U.S. Rep. Doug Collins; and numerous Chamber Ambassadors.

Those recognized that day as project partners included:

UCDA Board Members Scott Carter, Chairman; Gene Windham, Vice Chair; Mike Kiernan, Treasurer; Bill McGlamery, Rick Davenport and Tsali Bentley;

The staffs of the Georgia DCA, TVA, Georgia DED, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC and the GMRC; as well as the general contractor responsible for the building, J.M. Williams; Project Engineer Cleve Cunningham; and Chad and Ricky Rich with Rich Backhoe and Grading.

Several people missed the ribbon cutting due to scheduling conflicts but sent ahead their best wishes:

State Rep. Matt Gortler; State Sen. Steve Gooch; Georgia DED Regional Project Manager Tammy Caudell; Andrew Seaver of U.S. Sen. David Perdue's office; and Drew Ferguson of U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson's office.

Chick-fil-A of Blairsville catered the event.

SkillsUSA...from Page 1A

Center in Atlanta was jam packed over the four days of the 2018 State Leadership & Skills Conference, with 2,700 students registered to compete.

Woody Gap Principal Carol Knight attended the competition to lend her support and to assist the students during the event.

"Austin represented our values at the SkillsUSA competition, and everyone is very proud of his work ethic," said Knight. "Building Maintenance is an important part of the building industry, turning the final construction product into a clean space ready to be occupied by a family or business."

On the Union County High side of the competition, Metals Technology teacher Derick Dillinger said he couldn't be prouder of his young competitors.

"They have worked very hard and have been dedicated," said Dillinger. "After last year's competition, they came home with determination to place in the Top 3 and went to work at getting better. It's good to see them have some success."

Added Dillinger: "I would like to thank the families of these guys. They have great work ethic and many great qualities that stem from home and the time they've spent with them."

UCHS Principal C.T. Hussion was also very proud of the high school's young men.

"Welding Fabrication is a critical skill that provides multitudes of opportunities to our graduates," said Hussion. "Thank you also to their teacher, Mr. Dillinger, for passing on his knowledge and talented skills to our youth."

SkillsUSA is a national, nonprofit student organization that has developed more than 10



Photo by Mark Novak

Levi Etheridge and Matthew Moody of Woody Gap School during the steel framing and drywall competition at SkillsUSA.

million workers through active partnerships between employers and educators.

Hundreds of American industries have turned to SkillsUSA as the source for employees who exemplify "Champions at Work" in both skills and attitudes, according to SkillsUSAGeorgia.org.

All told, six students from Union County High and 14 students from Woody Gap competed in the SkillsUSA Georgia competition.

From UCHS, Robby Garrett competed in the welding sculpture event, Connor Potts competed in welding project display, and the four Second Place winners – Rowan, Collins, Raper and Tritt – rounded out the roster of competitors from the high school.

Garrett, a junior, put approximately two months' worth of work into the welding sculpture he put on display at the event.

"My dad taught me how to stick weld, and when I got in high school Mr. Dillinger taught me how to do MIG and TIG welding," said Garrett. "I've been welding since I was 10 years old."

Woody Gap School's 14 students competed in eight different skills competitions.

"This is great for the kids," said Woody Gap teacher Gary Butler. "We try to focus on what the students enjoy doing and get them involved in the SkillsUSA program."

The following Woody Gap Students took part in the 2018 SkillsUSA competition:

William Day competed in the Tile event.

Montana Barnes, Eliza Wilkins and Rachel Alphin competed in the Occupational Health & Safety event.

Duncan Lee, Wes Ponder and Ernest Waldroup competed in the Crime Scene Investigation event.

Austin Clark and Eric LeCroy competed in the Woodworking Display event.

Grant Disser competed in the Small Engine event.

Joseph Corbin competed in the Firefighter and Welding Sculpture events.

Austin Crocker competed in the Building Maintenance event.

Matthew Woody and Levi Etheridge competed in the Metal Framing and Drywall event.

"We have a commitment at Woody Gap School to have our students explore what the career options are out there in the world," said Principal Knight.

Added Knight: "We tell our students if the question you're asking yourself is do I want to go to college or not, you're asking the wrong question."

"The question needs to be, how am I going to support myself and my family in the future? What's my purpose in life? How am I going to get there? By doing whatever it takes to get there."

Thanks to Woody Gap parent Chris Disser, the students who attended the event from Suches had T-shirts that made them stand out in the crowd.

"The future belongs to the few of us still willing to get our hands dirty," read the T-shirts.

SkillsUSA's mission is to empower its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens.

At the heart of this mission are SkillsUSA's core values: integrity, responsibility, citizenship, service and respect.

SkillsUSA Georgia is focused on serving high school students involved in architecture, construction, communication, cosmetology, public safety, and transportation pathways, according to the website.