

BUSINESS

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JOB TRAINING



JOEL ANDREWS/The Lufkin Daily News

Huntington Middle School teacher Michael Lantz poses for a photo in front of Lufkin Gears. Lantz looks forward to showing his students there are good-paying jobs and opportunities in East Texas.



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Axley & Rode marketing coordinator Jennifer Gage, left, and Lufkin High School teacher Sonja Stephens review lessons learned at the accounting firm. Gage said it has been great to have Stephens there as part of the goal of the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants to expose students to accounting careers.

Educators participate in Teacher Externship Program

By KAYLEY FRAZE
The Lufkin Daily News

East Texas educators have spent the week gaining real-world perspective in various industries to take back to their students.

Career and Technical Education teachers from school districts including Lufkin, Diboll, Huntington, Corrigan-Camden and Nacogdoches spent three days learning, observing and job-shadowing at various companies through WorkForce Solutions' Deep East Texas Teacher Externship Program.

Participating companies included Axley & Rode, Etech, Lee Trans, Lockheed Martin, Lufkin Gears, McWilliams & Son, St. Luke's Health-Memorial and Woodland Heights Medical Center, among others. The teachers shared their experiences on Friday at Angelina College.

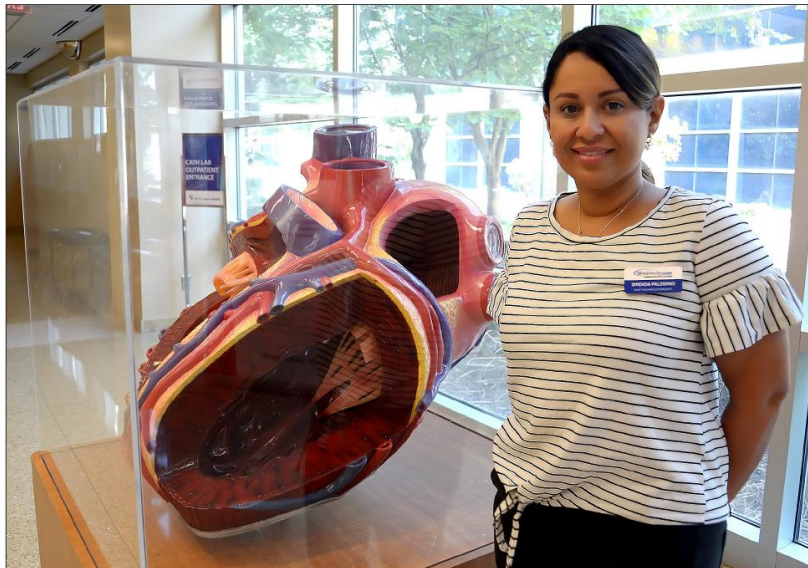
Diboll High School teacher Brenda Palomino learned about support services, biomedical technology and therapy services at St. Luke's.

"I have been able to actually go into the different career pathways and actually have been able to speak to the different directors in those areas and bring great information back to my students as far as their careers," she said. "I'm excited to have them research the different careers."

Palomino learned about the shortage that is facing the workforce right now, as well as some of the careers students might not know are available at a hospital, she said.

"There's a lot behind the scenes that has to do with health care that I can bring back to the students and give them knowledge on that," she said. "We always see the frontline in health care — we never see the behind the scenes — and they all work together to make it all happen. It's a team."

Eric Robinson, St. Luke's senior vice president of operations, said



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Diboll High School teacher Brenda Palomino poses for a photo at St. Luke's Health-Memorial. Palomino learned about support services, biomedical technology and therapy services at St. Luke's — all information she can share with her students.

it has been a pleasure having Palomino at the hospital. He also was excited that students would be learning about health care careers about which they might not otherwise know.

"Most high school students — if they're anything like I was — whenever you're that age, you think hospitals employ nurses and doctors," he said. "It takes a lot of different roles to make a hospital function, and just to give her a little bit of insight into the multitude of opportunities that we have in the health care industry and the ability to ask people questions like, 'How did you get there? What type of education did you need

to do the job that you do?' So that she can share that with her students."

Huntington Middle School teacher Michael Lantz, who spent the week at Lufkin Gears, enjoyed touring the plant and shadowing workers including the disassembly group and the small parts crew.

"It's been very eye-opening to find out how many jobs it does take to complete the process that they do here, be it repair or building a new unit," he said. "The number of jobs that are available here — it was amazing to find out how many different types of disciplines that could be used here."

Lantz looks forward to showing his

students there are good-paying jobs and opportunities in East Texas.

"A lot of these kids don't have a big world view, and you come to work at Lufkin Gears, you're working for a multinational company," he said. "That is a huge thing coming from a town of 2,100-2,200 people in Huntington."

Lufkin Gears business management process leader Danise LePage-Berry said employees have enjoyed having Lantz at the facility and are excited to know future generations will be learning about the number of opportunities there.

"You don't necessarily have to have a four-year degree to get into

some of these jobs," she said. "As a local employer, I think it's so important that we start feeding back into the community with our children."

Lufkin High School teacher Sonja Stephens, who spent the week at Axley & Rode, is eager to teach her kids different things that will prepare them to enter the workforce, she said.

"I wanted to come into some type of business as a business teacher to make sure that those things that I teach my kids are things that actually take place in a business," she said. "I teach about job applications and resumés and job interviews, and so I had a great conversation with one of the partners where we talked about those things and she gave me specific tips on what they look for so I can take those back to my kids."

Stephens also is thrilled to be able to share with her students what skills employers seek.

"I've made a huge place of workplace skills — it's almost to 40," she said with a laugh. "I ask everyone that I talk to, 'What workplace skills do you think people need to have?' And most students can tell me, 'I know I have to be at work on time, be responsible, be respectful,' but there's a lot more things like attention to detail and email etiquette, confidentially issues that I don't think about, but it's important."

Axley & Rode marketing coordinator Jennifer Gage said it has been great to have Stephens there as part of the goal of the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants is to expose students to accounting careers.

"We now have somebody who can say, 'Oh, yeah, this is a really lucrative career path. This is a really good place for you if you're interested,'" she said. "Being able to get a teacher in here to understand more about what our profession can offer has been really good for us."

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