PULSE CHECK
OCTOBER 2026

ACCS INNOVATION CENTER



A New Look for a Team That's Always Moving Forward

You'll notice something different about this issue. It's the first time the new brand for the ACCS Innovation Center (IC) has appeared in Pulse Check, and our refreshed logo, bolder color palette, and sharper visual identity reflect much more than a design update.

The ACCS Innovation Center exists to close the gap between what Alabama's workforce needs and what it has, and this branding carries that energy forward. As a division of the Alabama Community College System, we bring together community colleges statewide, employers, and industry partners to build fast and flexible career training through Skills for Success (SFS). These courses get Alabamians into good jobs faster and help employers attract the talent they need to grow. It's training built by Alabamians, for Alabamians, and delivered wherever the need is greatest, from cities to rural communities across the state.

This new identity is built to carry the stories further as we meet participants on their journeys to new careers, employers on the path to trained talent, and communities in building stronger workforces for the days ahead.

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Skills for Success Training Courses Serve Alabama

Across Alabama, workforce needs look different from one industry to the next, and SFS courses are built to meet each industry in those places of need. In each issue, we're spotlighting a few of the industries the IC serves, along with the training pathways helping employers find skilled talent and helping Alabamians find their next career move. Check out this issue's spotlights below:

Construction

Regional Flooring Installation Technician Course



Through a partnership between Jefferson State Community College, Lawson State Community College and the Floor Covering Education Foundation, participants were able to grow their skills to find employment. Congratulations to DJ, Tyler, Josh, and Ray for completing a complex Skills for Success course to become Flooring Installation Technicians. This course covers Tile, Hardwood, Laminate, and Carpet, with each participant earning four Skills for Success credentials upon successful course completion.





SkillsUSA Alabama Heavy Equipment Operator Competition

Several high school students qualified to compete at the SkillsUSA Alabama Heavy Equipment Operator Competition through completing specific SFS courses. The event was held at the Riverchase Career Connection Center with Hoover City Schools, and competitors were required to complete at least one Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) skill, Skid Steer or Excavator. Many completed both, and some completed the entire training bundle.



Congratulations to:
Gold: Eddie Paul - Baldwin Preparatory Academy
Silver: Jackson Baker - Hillcrest High School
Bronze: Ben Wilson - Haleyville Center of Technology

Partnerships, people, and a pipeline of opportunities for trained talent make workforce growth in Alabama possible. We see it through events like the SkillsUSA Alabama Heavy Equipment Operator Competition, supported by industry partners Wiregrass and APAC, and we continue it through SFS courses delivered by Alabama's community colleges statewide.

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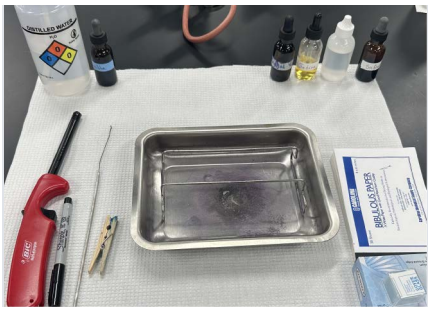
Healthcare & Human Services

Biotechnician

Calhoun Community College delivered a third pilot of the IC's Skills for Success Biotechnician course led by Instructor Sara Mason. This latest session provided a refined schedule, more focused protocols, and efficiency overall. The IC team looks forward to this course launching statewide.







Ambulance Operator Course

The IC's Skills for Success Ambulance Operator course is delivered through Alabama's community colleges. It prepares participants for one of health science's most critical roles, getting patients the care they need, safely and on time. Every time.







Supply Chain & Transportation

ACCS CDL Professional Development

The ACCS Workforce Development team, in partnership with the IC team, hosted commercial driving instructors and workforce team members for a one-day professional development session. The session focused on Training Provider Registry (TPR) responsibilities, grading and proctoring standards, documentation, and operational best practices in alignment with Skills for Success CDL training courses.





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Career Exploration Simulators Recap

From classrooms to conferences to community events, the IC has been on the move this year, sparking career exploration and connecting attendees to hands-on training opportunities through Alabama's community colleges, where they can take Skills for Success courses. Here's a look at some of the places we've visited and more information on how you can bring our Career Exploration Simulators to your event.



IGNITE Program

Jefferson County Jail participates in a program called IGNITE (Inmate Growth Naturally and Intentionally Through Education). The program aims to prepare justice-impacted individuals for a successful return to the community. Once an individual selects a career path, they have the opportunity to enroll in the corresponding SFS courses to begin workforce training. Recently, the IC team also brought two simulators on site and spent the day walking 17 IGNITE program participants through career simulator experiences.



Boys and Girls Club Career Development

Through a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club, club members received a taste of skilled trade careers. Behind the wheel of IC career simulators, they experienced commercial truck driving, construction, and heavy equipment operations. Learning was enhanced through the use of steering wheels and joysticks to capture what these careers actually feel like in a safe environment. Curious young minds and a future full of options are what career exploration is all about, and the IC is proud to lead the way in these conversations.



Qualico Steel Workforce Night

In collaboration with Wallace Community College, more than 5,400 attendees came together for Dothan United's Salute to Skilled Trades Night with representatives from partner sponsor Qualico Steel. Throughout the evening visitors stopped by to test their skills on the IC's Career Exploration Simulator Trailers while enjoying all the opportunities the event had to offer.



STEAMQUEST Camp

The IC had the opportunity to bring Career Exploration Simulators to Trenholm State Community College for a group of seventh and eighth grader middle school students. This provided them with a chance to gain practical experience, giving them a hands-on look at career paths they hadn't considered yet with direct connections for next steps.

Interested in bringing a trailer to your school or community events?

Onsite visit requests may be submitted online here.

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Welcome to the Team!

We're proud to welcome Janice Crowder and Tony Wilson to the ACCS Innovation Center.



Janice Crowder

Spotlight on Janice Crowder, Creative Media Specialist

Janice brings branding, visual storytelling, and design strategy to the ACCS Innovation Center. With a background in marketing and data visualization, and prior experience supporting defense contracts as a graphic design specialist, she has a sharp eye for translating complex work into clear, compelling visuals.

As Creative Media Specialist, Janice's work spans everything from presentations and slide decks to the visual identity behind the ACCS Innovation Center. Since her arrival, she has been an integral part of the IC's rebranding effort across print and digital deliverables, helping shape the refreshed look now carried across the organization.



Tony Wilson

Spotlight on Tony Wilson, South Region Career Readiness Coordinator

Tony brings more than three decades of experience serving Alabama students and communities through education, counseling, leadership, and workforce development. Throughout his career, he has held a variety of impactful roles, including Academic Advisor and Transfer Coordinator at Reid State Community College, Assistant Principal and Guidance Counselor with Covington County Schools, and Teacher.

As South Region Career Readiness Coordinator, Tony will support the ACCS Innovation Center's Career Readiness mission of connecting students, educators, workforce partners, and employers while expanding awareness of career opportunities throughout South Alabama.

We're excited to have them both on the team and look forward to the impact they'll make across Alabama.

