



Georgia—Rural Business Service

Strategic Partners

Committed to the future of rural communities.

Commercial Truck Drivers Trained — Get Jobs!

Outline Of Need: Truck Drivers are in high demand and there is a nationwide shortage. Graduates of Commercial Truck Driving programs are almost immediately placed in jobs. Equipment and vehicles can be a considerable financial investment and such equipment experiences more wear and tear because of students. At Okefenokee Technical College, the existing vehicle didn't function well or reflect current industry dimensions.

How Rural Development Helped:

USDA Rural Development provided a Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) for \$98,000 to Okefenokee Technical College to purchase a vehicle. This grant was made possible through Recovery Act funding.

The Results:

A celebration was held January 13, 2011 in Waycross, Georgia. The purchased vehicle underwent modification of the cab, so that it would hold an instructor and three student drivers, allowing more students to be trained at the same time and cutting down on fuel costs.

Also purchased was a 53 foot trailer, that allows students to practice turning, backing and maneuvering the most common type and size trailer used by the trucking industry.

“Equipment like this keeps student training on track,” said Donnie Thomas, acting state director of USDA Rural Development. “When we invest in education, we are investing in the future.”

The commercial truck driving program at Okefenokee Tech serves Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Pierce and Ware Counties.

Since 2003, 258 students have graduated. Of those, 224 have been employed as professional drivers, 17 have been placed in a related employment field, and 7 continued with their education.

This represents a 93.41 percent placement rate. Of the 241 truck driving jobs filled in rural Georgia, about half were serving small businesses.



Above: Representatives of USDA Rural Development and Okefenokee Technical College at the celebration in January.



Middle Left: The new truck purchased for Okefenokee Tech students in the Commercial Truck Driving Program;



Below Left: The vehicle has a huge wrap-around graphic, including bold placement of the USDA Rural Development logo.

Fast Facts

Program: Rural Business Enterprise Grant

Investment: \$98,000

Partners: Okefenokee Technical College

Congressional District: GA-01

Demographics: Serves 6 South Georgia counties

Impact:

- High demand for truck drivers—93% job placement
- Supports businesses, over half are small businesses
- Improved public safety