

Workforce Development Program at Cerrowire Model for State of Alabama

Hartselle, AL — Cerrowire® recently hosted a tour of state and local leaders to highlight the impact of TigerLaunch, an apprenticeship-style high school program for Alabama workforce development. Industry leaders plan to use the Hartselle City Schools manufacturing career academy's capstone course as a model for other workforce transformation programs throughout the state.

Cerrowire has participated in TigerLaunch since it started in 2018. Four students were placed in production positions at the Hartselle plant the first year and the number of participants grew to seven in the 2020-2021 school year. Cerrowire has employed 20 students as a part of the "earn and learn" program.

TigerLaunch participants attend high school classes and work at least one 4-hour shift daily depending on their school schedule. The program has grown each year to encompass other school districts and more than 60 students.

"We are glad state, education and industry leaders have chosen to visit Cerrowire to witness the benefits of TigerLaunch. Highlighting impactful programs like this helps people understand that, although college is a great path, there are other pathways to success in Alabama," Cerrowire President Stewart Smallwood said.

TigerLaunch alumnus and Cerrowire apprentice Webb Harris spoke to the group about the benefits of TigerLaunch on his career path. He discussed how his family had to rely on his income during his high school years and how the TigerLaunch job with Cerrowire helped pay the bills.

"At first, I had no idea of the opportunities I could be offered in industry. Through TigerLaunch, I discovered I don't have to go to a university to have a successful career," Harris said.

When he graduated this year, Harris reached out to Cerrowire about a full-time position and the possibility of expanding an apprenticeship program for high school graduates and current team members while they continue their education. Now a full-time employee, he holds an apprenticeship position with the national copper wire manufacturer, and Cerrowire will pay his tuition to train in an Industrial Maintenance-Electrical and Instrumentation pathway.

Laura Kappler-Roberts, president of Kappler Manufacturing in Guntersville, AL, a global leader in chemical protective clothing, is a member of the governor-appointed state workforce committee and a Guntersville Schools board member. She has been eyeing TigerLaunch and its success. She said, "Our goal is for Kappler and Guntersville High to mimic this partnership and be a model for Marshall County, AL, then grow it throughout the state in order to develop our workforce, starting with the youth."

Hartselle City Schools Career Tech Director Jeff Hyché was instrumental in developing TigerLaunch in 2018. He sees expansion of the program as a win-win for individuals, schools, industries and communities. "In addition to earning a paycheck and getting invaluable hands-on training, our TigerLaunch students can also graduate from us having earned powerful resume-building college credits and important industry certifications."

He added, "We know other school systems, industries, and community colleges can make this model work and reap rewards for their own communities. No doubt this same model can be expanded into other career areas with a similar approach."

Smallwood echoed the success of programs like TigerLaunch in developing a strong workforce. He said, "The more we interact with these programs, the easier it is to train and maintain team members. We need more Webbs in our business. We enjoy the collaboration! Anything we can do to support this effort, we're all in."



*From left, Hartselle City Schools Career Tech Director **Jeff Hyche**; Hartselle Chamber of Commerce President and CEO **Missy Evans**; Guntersville Schools Superintendent **Jason Barnett**; Chairman of the Alabama Workforce Development Board **Tim McCartney**; Director of the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation **Nick Moore**; Cerrowire President **Stewart Smallwood**; Guntersville Schools Assistant Superintendent **Jeff Jones**; Cerrowire apprentice **Webb Harris**; Assistant State Superintendent of Education, Career and Technical Education/Workforce Development **Jimmy Hull**; Kappler Industries Human Resources Manager **Kay Miller**; Kappler Industries Manufacturing Director **Andre Thomas**; Kappler Industries President **Laura Kappler-Roberts**; Guntersville Schools Work-Based Learning Coordinator **Amber Harbison**; Hartselle Chamber of Commerce Director of Membership and Marketing **Tabatha Nowak**; Guntersville High Principal **Roseanne Mabry**; Alabama Department of Education Administrator for Workforce Development **Nancy Prine** and Hartselle City Schools Superintendent **Dee Dee Jones***

Photo File Name: Webb Harris group shot 052521_caption.jpg

Full caption is included in photo, but here is the text should you need it:

CAPTION: *From left, Hartselle City Schools Career Tech Director **Jeff Hyche**; Hartselle Chamber of Commerce President and CEO **Missy Evans**; Guntersville Schools Superintendent **Jason Barnett**; Chairman of the Alabama Workforce Development Board **Tim McCartney**; Director of the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation **Nick Moore**; Cerrowire President **Stewart Smallwood**; Guntersville Schools Assistant Superintendent **Jeff Jones**; Cerrowire apprentice **Webb Harris**; Assistant State Superintendent of Education, Career and Technical Education/Workforce Development **Jimmy Hull**; Kappler Industries Human Resources Manager **Kay Miller**; Kappler Industries Manufacturing Director **Andre Thomas**; Kappler Industries President **Laura Kappler-Roberts**; Guntersville Schools Work-Based Learning Coordinator **Amber Harbison**; Hartselle Chamber of Commerce Director of Membership and Marketing **Tabatha Nowak**; Guntersville High Principal **Roseanne Mabry**; Alabama Department of Education Administrator for Workforce Development **Nancy Prine** and Hartselle City Schools Superintendent **Dee Dee Jones***

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About Cerrowire

Headquartered in Hartselle, Alabama, Cerrowire is a copper wire manufacturing company with plants in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, and Utah. We supply building wire and cable throughout North America for commercial, industrial and residential use. Our products are available through electrical distributors, wholesalers, and retailers.