



The Cutting Edge

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What's The Latest News?



2026-2027 CTE High-Demand and High-Wage (H2) Pathways

ACT 237 of 2023 requires that public school districts offer at least one career and technical education (CTE) pathway that meets the state definition of High Demand and High Wage (H2). For the 2026-2027 school year there are 29 CTE pathways that meet the state definition of High Demand and High Wage. See Commissioner's Memo [CTE-26-004](#) for more information.

University of Central Arkansas (UCA) Announces Innovation Campus

The UCA Board of Trustees recently voted to move forward with the development of a new Innovation Campus, an interdisciplinary initiative designed to strengthen workforce readiness, expand applied research and support economic growth across Central Arkansas and throughout the state. The Innovation Campus will bring students closer to the industries they are preparing to enter while giving employers a direct role in shaping talent development.

This initiative is a collaborative effort among **UCA, Conway Development Corporation, and the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton (UACCM)** and will feature both academic and workforce training spaces, including **engineering faculty offices and laboratories**, open project areas for student-led engineering work, and administrative and instructional space for the **Arkansas Coding Academy**. The project is designed to support workforce needs in **engineering, technology, health informatics and skilled trades**, while providing flexible space for research, innovation and reskilling initiatives. With the completion of the limited renovations and improvements in spring and summer of 2026, classes and lab activities will begin in August 2026.





NLR and UA-PTC Partner on “Scholastic Institute”

By way of a partnership agreement between the North Little Rock School District and the University of Arkansas Pulaski Technical College (UA-PTC), high school students have a new coordinated pathway to earning a college degree before graduation. This partnership will empower students to dive into college and career coursework early, building the 'future-ready' skills they need to succeed. The "Scholastic Institute" allows 10th -12th grade students who are qualified to register in concurrent classes that meet requirements in general education for an Associate of General Studies degree. Students who qualify can transfer to the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and pay the same rate in base tuition that is offered by UA-PTC while working toward their bachelor's degree.

State to Build High-Skilled Cybersecurity and IT Talent Pipeline

Arkansas is partnering with Grow with Google on a new initiative that will give Arkansans training that will prepare them for the technology-driven workplace of today and tomorrow. The Grow with Google initiative offers free access to multiple job training programs that provide certificates and credentials in fields such as cybersecurity, data analytics, digital marketing and e-commerce, and IT support. Each program has been developed in cooperation with industry partners to meet the needs of employers and to provide a pathway for new careers and upskilling. The Grow with Google partnership is an investment in Arkansas' future that will prepare the workforce of tomorrow and fuel our economy's growth in the years to come. [APPLICATION FORM](#)



Fayetteville CTE Students Excel

Students in **Film** classes at Fayetteville High School (FHS) have had a busy production season. Utilizing the new PTZ camera system in the FHS Performing Arts Center, students have recorded and streamed three band concerts, three orchestra concerts, and three choir concerts, as well as recording the fall play, Project Runway, and the Fine Arts Showcase, where fine arts students in the PAC demonstrated a variety of instruments and opportunities for 6th graders. Hands-on experiences such as these are crucial for students in CTE classes because they boost engagement, improve memory retention by connecting theory to practice, build essential real-world skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, foster creativity, and increase motivation by making learning active rather than passive. They help solidify understanding, develop confidence, and bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and practical application, preparing them for further education and future careers.



Students in the **Advanced Television** class at FHS recently created this new promotional video for CTE in FPS. Check it out by clicking [HERE!](#)

Members of the FHS FBLA chapter recently attended the District VII Spring Conference at Northwest Arkansas Community College in Bentonville and brought home numerous awards and state conference qualifiers. FHS students won first place in Entrepreneurship, Business Management, Financial Planning, and Introduction to Marketing Concepts.

Members of the FHS DECA chapter recently competed at the Arkansas DECA State Career Development Conference in Hot Springs and brought home several awards, including first place in Financial Consulting.



Bentonville Students Develop Device to Assist Individuals with Autism

Students at Bentonville HS have developed a cutting-edge device using AI and sensors to help nonverbal individuals with autism communicate more effectively. The students, working alongside the organization Autism Involves Me, have combined artificial intelligence and sensor technology to create a tool that could make a significant impact.

The device attaches to phones or tablets and uses temperature and humidity sensors to detect changes in stress levels. It then displays a color-coded indicator — red for stressed, green for calm, and yellow for caution — allowing caregivers and educators to better understand emotional states and provide timely support.

The students are using artificial intelligence to analyze data from the sensors and interpret stress levels. Beyond its technological innovation, the project promotes inclusion and understanding for students who communicate differently. The students hope their device will gain attention not only in schools but also in local businesses, and they're optimistic about its potential to expand and help more people in the future.

National Park College Receives Grant to Expand Welding Offerings

National Park College (NPC) in Hot Springs recently received a \$500,000 grant from the Windgate Foundation to support a new welding facility, scheduled to open in August, 2026. The grant includes funds for new welding equipment and student scholarships. By strengthening the welding program, NPC is helping meet regional workforce needs while giving students the skills and confidence to build stable futures close to home.



UA-PTC to Build Workforce Training Center



The University of Arkansas Pulaski Technical College recently announced plans to build a workforce training center at the Little Rock Port with \$20 million in federal funds. The port facility will support workforce training programs by offering manufacturing and logistics training that meets the needs of current and future employers in central Arkansas. The building will include high-voltage lineman training areas, parking and a connecting plaza. The Little Rock Regional Chamber and Little Rock Port Authority are partners on the project.

The center will have adaptable space capable of supporting abbreviated process lines, advanced manufacturing training, robotics and automation instruction, and large-scale career fairs — capacity that does not currently exist within available facilities serving the port.

Paragould Students Attend Annual CTE Day at the Capitol

Paragould SD was honored to be invited to the annual CTE Day at the Capitol in February, where students had the opportunity to showcase the outstanding work of district CTE programs, students, and educators. Representing Agricultural Sciences were teacher Amanda Davis and FFA and Agri students Tyler Ray and Cammy Brown. Broadcasting and Digital Media programs were represented by Broadcasting Director Zach Kent, Digital Media Teacher Britton Hargrave, senior and digital media student Jesse Pewitt—also an Army JROTC member—and sophomore digital media student Aynn Kramer. High School Principal Evan Elmore and Luke Guenrich, School Improvement Specialist and CTE Director, also attended in support of students and programs. During the event, Ross White, DCTE Director, and Secretary of Education Jacob Oliva were interviewed by the Ram Digital Media team.

[View a video recap of the event here!](#)



Bentonville Students Developing App to Support Rural First Responders



Students at Bentonville HS have spent their senior year developing an app to support first responders in rural areas. The app is designed to help EMS professionals regardless of the location they respond to a call. One use of AI within the app is for providing instructions to first responders based on protocols in a particular state or some other jurisdiction. The app also aims to improve patient hand-off when an individual is transferred from the care of an EMS professional to a hospital. All group members are seniors in the School District's Ignite Professional Studies program, which enables students to receive real-world career preparatory training and, in many career areas, earn certifications and partake in internships.

Fountain Lake Schools Expand CTE Offerings for Students

Fountain Lake High School students could soon see expanded access to college credit, career pathways and work-based learning. The ACCESS Act of 2025 requires all public school districts and charter schools, beginning this school year, to offer at least four accelerated learning courses that cover math, English, science and social studies. The Act also expanded financial support through the Access to Acceleration Scholarship, which allows high school students to use lottery-funded scholarships to offset the cost of concurrent college courses.

The district is expanding partnerships with National Park College and Saline County Career and Technical Campus, while also growing on-campus career and technical education offerings. Fountain Lake currently offers five on-site CTE pathways and is planning to increase that number to nine by the 2026-27 school year.

The district has also created what is called the Cobra Dual Pathway program, which aligns high school graduation requirements with concurrent credit coursework, so students earn both high school and college credit without duplicating classes. A new work-based learning program is also planned for seniors beginning next school year. The program will allow eligible students to earn credit while gaining on-the-job experience during part of the school day, while still participating in athletics, band or other activities.



ASU-Newport Receives Federal Funding for Health Service Center

Federal funding in the amount of \$7.7M will allow ASU-Newport to build a 44,000 sq. ft health service center to house programs on physical therapy and pharmaceutical and hospital support. Other contributors to the \$19M project includes the city of Newport, Jackson County, and local businesses, and various grants. Construction is planned to be complete by the summer of 2028. This initiative will improve health career options for local students and meet workforce demands in the region.

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