

STC Instructor Linda Hairr Named Top Nine in Georgia for Rick Perkins Award

Southeastern Technical College (STC) is proud to announce that Cosmetology Instructor Linda Hairr was recognized among the top nine instructors in the state of Georgia for the Rick Perkins Award for Excellence in Technical Instruction, presented by the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) during its annual conference in Atlanta.

Now in its 35th year, the Rick Perkins Award for Excellence in Technical Instruction honors the system's most outstanding instructors, recognizing innovation in the classroom and a deep commitment to student success.

"I am deeply honored to have received such recognition, particularly because it was bestowed upon me by my own peers and coworkers," said Hairr. "Representing STC in this capacity is an incredible experience, made even more profound by being among the top nine across the state. Standing among such an elite group of professionals was truly humbling, and I will always be grateful for this opportunity."

Hairr has served as an instructor at Southeastern Technical College for 15 years and currently teaches on the Swainsboro campus. A five-time nominee for the Rick Perkins Award, she previously represented the College at the 2019 Georgia Occupational Award of Leadership (GOAL) and Rick Perkins Award Conference as the institution's award winner.

In addition to Hairr's statewide recognition, STC student Jessica Martinez-Ramos represented the College in the GOAL

program, which honors the most outstanding technical education students across the state. Now in its 54th year, GOAL celebrates student excellence, leadership, and achievement.

Martinez-Ramos, a licensed practical nurse pursuing an Associate of Science in Nursing Degree through STC's Bridge Pathway, reflected on her experience at the conference.

Martinez-Ramos said, "The GOAL conference reminded me that success is not a solo journey. It's built on shared struggles, lifted by support, and strengthened by the people who believe in you – even before you fully believe in yourself."

The state winners were announced during the April 22 conference banquet. As the 2026 State Rick Perkins Award winner, Christopher Davis, an Automotive Technology instructor from Augusta Technical College, received a crystal award and \$2,500. Thanapon (May) Saysombath, a Dental Hygiene student from Columbus Technical College, was named this year's State GOAL winner and received a brand-new Kia Sportage courtesy of Kia Georgia, a longtime supporter of technical education in Georgia.

During the conference, Kia Georgia also announced a \$100,000 donation to the TCSG Foundation, continuing its commitment to supporting Georgia's workforce pipeline.

"We are proud to continue our partnership with the Technical College System of Georgia and invest in the next generation of Georgia's workforce," said Kia Georgia President and CEO Stuart Countess. "Technical education plays a critical role in driving innovation and economic growth."

A portion of the donation is directed to the TCSG Foundation's Last Mile Fund, which provides financial assistance to students nearing graduation to help them overcome unexpected barriers and complete their credentials.

More than 159,000 students are enrolled across TCSG's 22 colleges, preparing for high-demand careers that support Georgia's position as the No. 1 state for business and the Top State for Talent.

Photo:

Front Row (L-R): Athens Technical College Business Management Instructor Keith McNeely, Sr., Oconee Fall Line Technical College Respiratory Care Instructor Kelley Braxton, Atlanta Technical College Criminal Justice Technology Instructor Safiyyah Mack, Augusta Technical College Automotive Technology Instructor and State Rick Perkins Award Winner Christopher Davis
Back Row (L-R): Savannah Technical College Early Childhood Care and Education Instructor Stephanie Grant, Southeastern Technical College Master Cosmetology Instructor Linda Hairr, Coastal Pines Technical College Surgical Technology Instructor Penny DiLorenzo, Lanier Technical College Radiologic Technology Instructor Erika Bongart, Albany Technical College English and Humanities Instructor Marla Fowler