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Career academy gives students a shot at future

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Staff/Chris Marley

Jennard Rainey, Judi Grubbs and Dr. Gary Martin stand in front of the ninth grade building at the site of the new Union City Campus of the Hapeville Charter Career Academy.

The first phase of the Union City Campus of the Hapeville Charter Career Academy is nearing completion. It will be open for 150 9th grade students in the fall.

The academy is a dream realized by Dr. Gary Martin, director and founder of the Hapeville Charter Middle School. In November 2007 Martin said they were awarded the Career Academy grant and purchased the 9.9 acres of land needed for the project. That grant money was used to build Phase I, which is the ninth grade building. Phase II, which Martin hopes will be completed in a year, will help the school continue to grade 12.

This is the first startup charter career academy in Fulton County, said Martin. What makes this school different than a regular high school is that in conjunction with taking regular classes, the students will take electives in dual enrollment courses toward certification.

The school is working with Atlanta Technical College in offering the students courses in auto front end alignment/brake systems, avionics technician, basic dental assisting, paralegal fundamentals and patient care assisting.

"My dream was to have a school working with the airport so that's how avionics came about," said Martin. "It started with a phone call to Dr. Alvetta Thomas who is president of Atlanta Tech."

Martin said Ms. Thomas endorsed the avionics course idea and also suggested

the others because of the high success of the students in those programs and their ability for employment once completed.

The school is open to all residents of the Fulton County School system and Martin said they have already received more than 50 applications. They will hold a registration meeting on Saturday at 10 a.m. at Atlanta Technical College, 1560 Metropolitan Pkwy. in Atlanta.

"What I'm looking forward to the most is meeting the students, working with their families and for successful careers," said Martin.

Even though the students will have dual enrollment with Atlanta Tech, Martin said they are not pushing that choice on them after they complete high school. They will encourage them to also look at other technical or regional schools.

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