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Wando High School science teacher learns from ArborGen scientists

Staff Report

Published July 25, 2011

Summerville biotech company [ArborGen \(http://www.arborgen.com/\)](http://www.arborgen.com/) hosted a [Wando High School \(http://www.wandohigh.com/\)](http://www.wandohigh.com/) science teacher last week as part of the [STEM in the Workplace \(http://www.edfound.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82&Itemid=95\)](http://www.edfound.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82&Itemid=95) program funded by a grant from the [Boeing Co \(http://www.boeing.com/\)](http://www.boeing.com/).

Kay Johnson, who teaches biology and biomedical innovations at Wando, spent the two-day externship interacting with ArborGen scientists, forestry experts and technicians.

STEM in the Workplace, funded by a \$129,000 grant from Boeing Co., was developed by [The Education Foundation \(http://www.edfound.net/\)](http://www.edfound.net/), part of the [Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce \(http://www.charlestonchamber.net/\)](http://www.charlestonchamber.net/). The initiative includes a weeklong session during which tri-county teachers in the STEM disciplines



ArborGen research associate Kim Winkeler watches as Wando High School teacher Kay Johnson loads DNA onto an agarose gel in the vector technology lab at ArborGen's headquarters in Summerville. (Photo/ArborGen)

— science, technology, engineering and math — learn project-based teaching strategies from local businesses.

Each teacher in the program is expected to use the skills to create and implement a project for the fall semester.

“Most teachers go directly from their own education into teaching. This program gives teachers a chance to see and work within the business world and then translate those experiences into ‘real world’ learning experiences for students,” said David Ramey, chairman of The Education Foundation.

Johnson’s biomedical innovations course is the fourth class in the biomedical engineering series in [Project Lead the Way \(http://www.pltw.org/\)](http://www.pltw.org/), a curriculum for STEM education used in middle and high schools across the country.

Johnson has been teaching at Wando for 13 years. She has an undergraduate degree from Furman University and a master of education degree from the University of South Carolina.

“We were happy to open our doors and labs to the STEM in the Workplace program,” ArborGen President and CEO Barbara Wells said. “ArborGen is dedicated to the community in which we live and work, and these types of skill exchange programs

help us pair our expertise with the development of a skilled work force. Hopefully some young person will take inspiration from one of these teachers and pursue a career in science or an emerging technology field.”

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