

How to Submit: Getting Your School's Stories in *Connections*

Webinar Wednesdays

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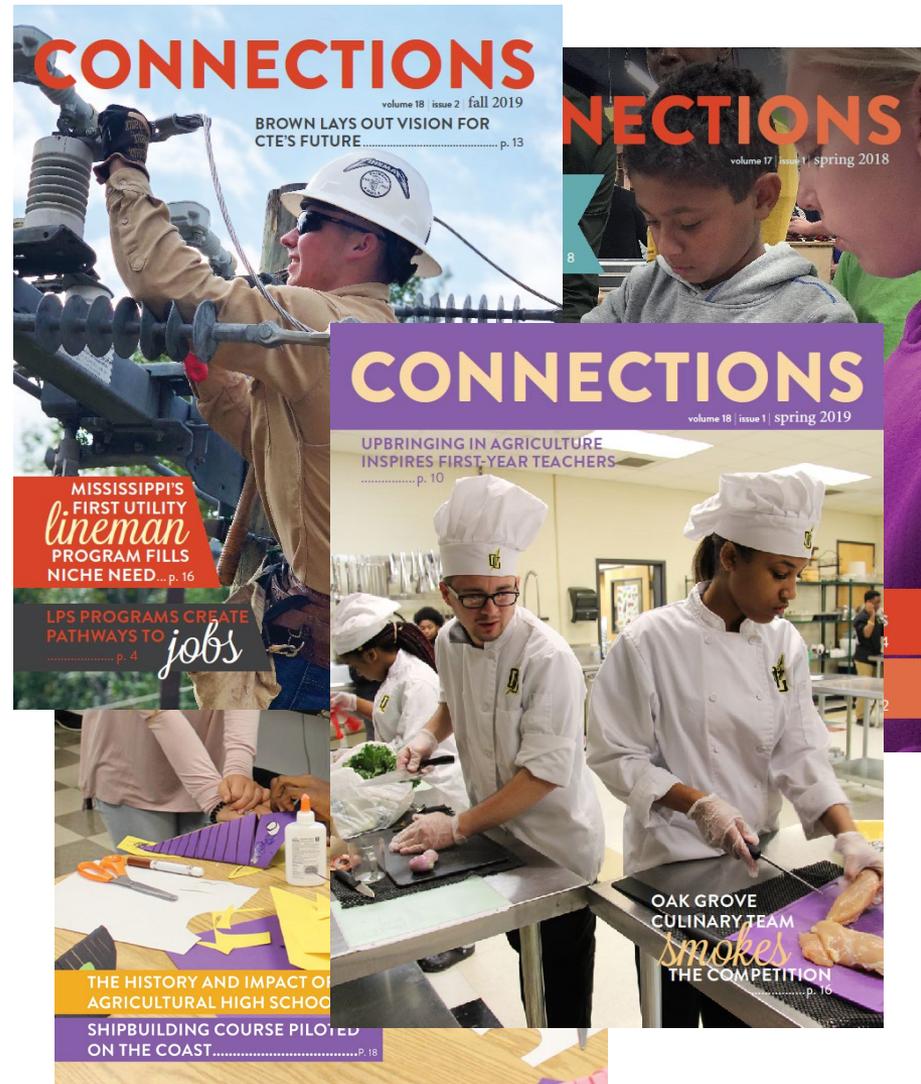
Welcome to *Webinar Wednesdays*

- You can find this webinar and others at rcu.msstate.edu.
 - Select Webinars under the Communication tab.
- Today's discussion will cover how to submit stories and pitches to *Connections* and how the RCU publishes them through various avenues of communication.
- We'll save time for questions at the end of the presentation.



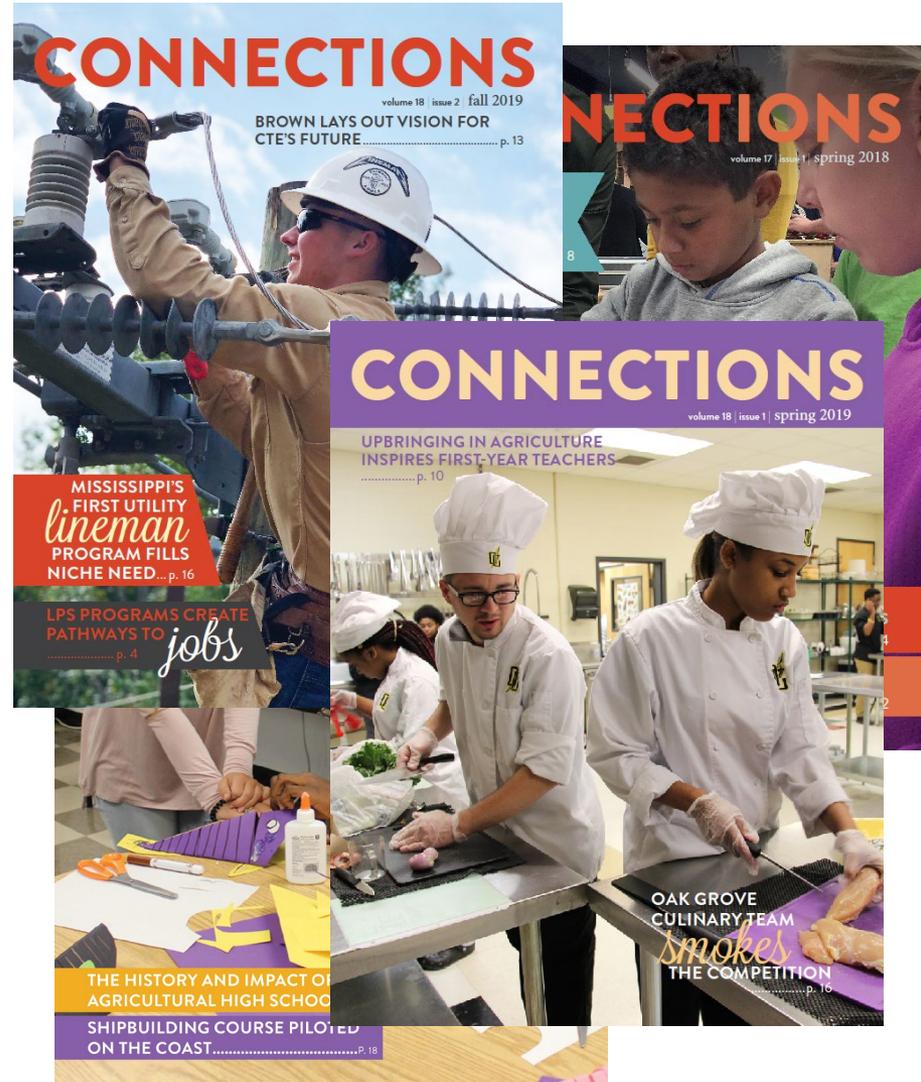
What Is *Connections*?

- Mississippi's career and technical education spotlight
- **Old view:** Just a magazine that publishes in the fall and spring
- **New view:** A brand that distributes information year-round through a variety of channels



What Is *Connections*?

- Stories and features include:
 - New, interesting and out-of-the-box curricula and instruction
 - Programs and pathway overviews
 - Public-private partnerships
 - Community service and outreach
 - Infrastructure improvements and new facilities
 - Conferences and competitions
 - Student and teacher profiles



We can't tell your CTE story until you tell us your *story*

CONNECTIONS



Want to have your students, program or career and technical center spotlighted in *Connections*? Here's how:

1

IDENTIFY

a new CTE activity, community service project or cutting-edge method of delivering instruction in your own classroom, school or district you feel should be shared across the state.

2

DOCUMENT

what's happening in the classroom with pictures of teachers, students and professionals working together. Be sure to only photograph students who have returned signed photo release forms to the school district.

4

SHARE

the release and photos with us via helpdesk@rcu.msstate.edu. Be sure to include "Connections" and your school district's/CTC's name in the subject line, and contact information for yourself or the class/program teacher and links to your district's and school's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts in the body of the email.

3

COMPOSE

a press release with information about the activity or event. Well-written press releases and photo information blurbs answer the five Ws of communication: who, what, when, where and why.

From there, our staff will reach out to possibly develop and publish your story!
There is no deadline for submissions, as our staff can publish your work on our *Connections* website and to social media at any time.

CONNECTIONS



Identify

- Preparation is the most important step!
- Teachers should identify curricula, partnerships, students, educators and programs deserving of publicity.
- Administrators and staff: Go into the classroom and talk to teachers to get ideas.



Document

- Your story is only as good as the information you collect!
 - Who? The people associated with the story.
 - What? The story's happenings.
 - When? The time elements associated with the story.
 - Where? The location associated with the story.
 - Why? The impact of the story's subject.
- Work with students and administration to ensure all featured students have approved photo release forms.
- Bring in partners and link the classroom to the real world.



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Compose

- Press releases control the narrative and can be shared with local media outlets.
- Use clear, concise communication in press releases.
- Ledes should identify important elements of a story and let the reader know why they should continue to read the story.
 - “Fourteen [career and technical center name] [class name] students experienced hands-on training through a summer apprenticeship at [local company name] that sharpened the hard and soft skills they’ll need after high school.”
- Ask yourself what happened and why it’s important – that’s your lede.



Share

helpdesk@rcu.msstate.edu

- Help Desk tickets should include:
 - Completed press release
 - Photos and information – answer the five Ws – about the pictures
 - “Connections” and your district’s/CTC’s name in the subject line
 - Your name and contact information in the email’s body
 - Links to your school’s social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

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Alternative Ways to Submit Stories

- Check-Ins
 - Email or call us with a pitch or an update.
 - “We have X, Y and Z planned for our [class name] this semester” or “Our [class name] students will travel to [conference] next semester.”
 - From there, we can discuss this idea, and the RCU can provide feedback on how to best cover the story.
 - Include the five Ws!
- Story Submission Form
 - msurcu.wufoo.com/forms/pt57tpv1uu1jvq
- Student/Teacher Spotlight Forms
 - Teachers: msurcu.wufoo.com/forms/zzmhmb112kzfi
 - Students: msurcu.wufoo.com/forms/musy1ki11937de
 - Provide us a photograph of the nominee, and we’ll supply a questionnaire for them to complete.



What Happens Next?

- After you submit your story, the RCU could:
 - Contact you for more information about your story and then feature your students, program and school on social media as soon as possible
 - Hold your press release or photo and information package for inclusion in the print edition of *Connections*
 - Assign one of our writers to further elaborate on your story and run the feature in an upcoming edition of the magazine



What Happens Next?

- Where you can find your story:
 - *Connections* website: rcu.msstate.edu/connections
 - Issuu: issuu.com/rcumedia/docs
 - Twitter: twitter.com/connectionsms
 - Facebook: twitter.com/connectionsms
 - Instagram: instagram.com/connectionsms
- If your story is featured in the print edition, we will send free copies of the magazine to you and the other sources in your story.
 - These are great to show off your and your students' work to superintendents, school board members and community stakeholders!
 - You can request additional copies of the magazine by filling out the form at msurcu.wufoo.com/forms/z5hs57s0f6fzex.



Closing Remarks

- The RCU enjoys the opportunity to tell the state about the great things happening in your classrooms.
- We depend on **you** to get the word out about your career and technical center and students.
- We're always looking for new stories! Feel free to contact us at any time about an idea.



Thanks for coming!
Any questions?

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