

February 1, 2012



# SKILLSUSA DAY AT THE STATE CAPITOL

## *Be an Advocate for SkillsUSA and CTAE*

February 1, 2012 will be SkillsUSA Day at the State Capitol. This gives members and advisors an opportunity to visit the State Capitol while the General Assembly is in session. *It is our best opportunity to inform legislators of the value of SkillsUSA and Career, Technical and Agricultural Education.* Legislators rely heavily on the viewpoints expressed by their local constituents when they make important decisions regarding educational issues. A day spent actively participating and engaged with our legislators provides an effective voice for our organization. A visit to the Georgia Capitol also offers students an opportunity to view first-hand state government in action and to learn about the judicial and lawmaking processes.

- **Tentative Schedule of Events**

The schedule is largely left up to the individual chapters to organize and arrange.

Below is a suggested schedule:

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.	Arrive at the Capitol and proceed through security
9:00 – noon	Schedule paging opportunities, visits with legislators, gallery viewing and tours if desired. If reading of a SkillsUSA Day Proclamation is arranged then chapters will be notified of the time and gallery beforehand. If a group picture with the Governor is arranged then chapters will be notified beforehand of the time and should meet on the rotunda steps.
Noon	Lunch with chapter members
1:00 p.m.	Travel back to school or continue with visits, etc. if time allows.

- **Contact Your Legislators In Advance**

Contact your legislators in early January to set up appointments to talk with them in person on February 1. By scheduling appointments in advance, members and advisors are more likely to receive at least a few minutes of undivided attention from local legislators. Senators and Representatives are usually more than happy to accommodate constituents, especially student groups. At the very least, he or she will probably make time for an official photograph with your chapter. It is probably best to make the initial contact by phone. Contact information for representatives' and senators' offices is available on the internet at <http://www.legis.ga.gov>. After initial contact is made, it is nice to follow up with a letter or email as well. *Students may also wish to serve as pages.* Legislators are allowed a limited number of page slots, so it is important to make these contacts early.

- **Dress**

All attendees should plan to wear their official uniform or SkillsUSA polo shirts.

- **Directions**

Maps and directions to the State Capitol are found on the website of the Office of the Georgia Secretary of State at [www.sos.state.ga.us/tours/map\\_directions.htm](http://www.sos.state.ga.us/tours/map_directions.htm)

Allow plenty of time to arrive, as Atlanta traffic will be heavy. If you have a long distance to travel, you may want to spend the night in Atlanta.

- **Parking/Transportation**

Buses and vans may drop off passengers on Washington Street in front of the Capitol but parking there is not allowed. Buses and vans may park near Turner Field. Please coordinate pickup time with your bus driver.

Automobile parking is available in the following lots for a small fee.

- Steve Polk Plaza                      Located on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive beside the World of Coca-Cola
- Underground Atlanta Public Lot                      Located on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
- Archives Parking Lot                      Located on Capitol Avenue

MARTA is also an option for transportation to the Capitol. MARTA exits located nearest the Capitol are the Georgia State Station (directly across from the Capitol in the Sloppy Floyd/ Twin Towers complex) or the Five Points Station (two blocks west of the Capitol at Underground Atlanta).

- **Entrance to the Capitol/ Security**

For the protection of state officials and the security of state records and property, security booths are located at each entrance to the Capitol. School groups usually enter the Capitol at the Washington Street entrance and will go through metal detectors. Your group should register at the security booth inside the door. Adult chaperones must show photo identification. While outside the Capitol, students must not climb on statues or walk through the grass or flowerbeds.

Students and chaperones are required to pass through a metal detector in a single file line. An x-ray machine will examine all backpacks, purses, and packages. Students should not bring radios, headphones, knives or any sharp objects into the Capitol.

- **Appointments with Legislators**

It may be necessary for you to notify the legislator of your arrival by sending a message to the house or senate floor. Officials at the desk outside each chamber can help you. When meeting in chapter groups with a legislator, remember the following.

- Be On Time – Members of the legislature are very busy, so don't be late for a scheduled appointment.
- Remain Calm – Put your leadership skills to work. Speak clearly and establish eye contact during your visit.
- Be Prepared – Tell your legislative leader why you are in Atlanta and what SkillsUSA and CTAE program are all about.
- Be Reasonably Brief – Remember to state your thoughts as concisely as possible.
- Remember to Say Thank You – Thank your legislative leader for his or her time and consideration of the important issues.

- **Viewing in the Galleries**

Teachers who wish to visit the viewing gallery of the House or Senate chambers should inform the staff outside the galleries and notify them of the number of students in their group. It may be necessary to wait 10-15 minutes to observe lawmakers in action.

Students should be reminded that important state business is being conducted in each chamber. All visitors to the galleries must remain seated and quiet and may not applaud. Students are not allowed to lean on the gallery railing from the first row. Applause, hisses or other noises in the House Gallery or in the lobbies during any speech or legislative proceeding shall be promptly suppressed.

- **Cameras inside the Capitol**

Photography is prohibited in the House and Senate galleries while the legislature is in session. Video cameras are also prohibited during the legislative session. If the General Assembly is not in session, flash photography is permitted as it is throughout the public areas of the Capitol.

- **Capitol Tours**

An interpretive tour provided by the Office of the Secretary of State provides students an overview of Georgia history with visual emphasis on current events, portraits, flags, statues and the Capitol building.

Georgia State Capitol Tours begin at the Capitol tour desk (located near the Washington Street entrance) and consist of a brief overview of Capitol history and the lawmaking process; a visit to the public galleries of the House of Representatives and Senate; and conclude with a visit to the Georgia Capitol Museum. Visitors are also encouraged to visit the "Hall of Valor," which houses Georgia's priceless collection of historic flags.

Tours are given Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Tours are approximately 45 minutes in duration and group sizes are limited to 50. These tours begin at the following times:

9:30 AM

10:30 AM

1:00 PM

2:00 PM

Tours should be scheduled in advance. To schedule a guided tour of the Capitol, school groups and other visitors should access [http://www.sos.state.ga.us/Tour\\_reservation/tourform.asp](http://www.sos.state.ga.us/Tour_reservation/tourform.asp) or contact the tour staff in the office of the Secretary of State by phone at (404) 656-2844 or via email at [sostour@sos.state.ga.us](mailto:sostour@sos.state.ga.us).

- **Dining Facilities**

Several dining options are available for school groups at lunchtime. If the group brings lunch, students may eat on the upper level of Plaza Park, near the Capitol Education Center and directly across from the western entrance of the Capitol. There is also a cafeteria in the Sloppy Floyd/ Twin Towers complex located across from the Capitol. The food court at Underground Atlanta is also nearby.

- **Restrooms**

Public restrooms in the Capitol are located on the first and third floors.

- **Final Thoughts**

- The sessions generally end by early afternoon, but it varies from day to day. Eat a good breakfast to sustain you until the day ends.
- To finish your day, you may want to visit Underground Atlanta for lunch and shopping.
- Network with other members from across the state as much as you can during the day.

- **Local PR**

- Duplicate this information for your administrators to let them know about this exciting day. Also duplicate and share the SkillsUSA Day at the Capitol Chapter Guide with your students.
- Send thank you notes to legislators for taking the time to talk with you and your students.
- Send a picture and article to your local newspaper.
- Send picture and article to [gsilvey@skillsudageorgia.org](mailto:gsilvey@skillsudageorgia.org) for posting on the SkillsUSA Georgia website.

- **Free Event**

- Please note that this is a free event for our members.

## Register your Chapter's Attendance

Directions: Complete the information below and either fax to 770-898-0566 or email to [gsilvey@skillsusageorgia.org](mailto:gsilvey@skillsusageorgia.org).

School Name:		
Advisor Name:		
Address:		
City, State, Zip:		
School Phone:		
Advisor Cell:		
Advisor Email:		
Number of Advisors Attending:		
Number of Students Attending:		
Arriving by:	<input type="checkbox"/> Car	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Van	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bus	