

# Staying Connected

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF MINNESOTA WEST COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE VOL. 5, NO.1, DECEMBER, 2007

## President Ron Wood to Retire in June, 2008

On August 20th, Minnesota West President Ron Wood announced his retirement effective June 30, 2008. He made the announcement during his annual address to faculty and staff at the all college duty day.

President Wood will complete 10 years of strong, fiscally responsible, and visionary leadership at the end of June. During his address he spoke about the 3 P's that were instrumental in his retirement decision; professional, personal, and physical. He felt professionally, after 10 years at the helm, the college would benefit from new leadership and the infusion of new ideas. On a personal level, President Wood plans to channel his interest in a new civic direction having recently been elected Alderman for the City of Worthington. He also hopes to return to the



Dr. Wood addresses the crowd at the Wind Energy dedication ceremony on the Canby Campus.

classroom and teach economics as well as continuing to coach golf at Minnesota West. Physically the decision was an easy one. Traveling more than 40,000 miles a year commuting between campuses and the Office of the Chancellor takes a physical toll.

During President Wood's tenure the college



Dr. Wood talks with U of M Athletic Director, Joel Maturi and new Gopher men's basketball Coach, Tubby Smith when they stopped at Minnesota West for a Golden Gopher rally.

attained 10 year accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Enrollment has remained steady, due in part to his expansion of online delivery. As a result, the college now serves approximately 23% of its student population online. President Wood has tirelessly worked with communities and business leaders throughout the region to expand higher education opportunities and as a result, Minnesota West now has learning sites in Fairmont and Luverne. Included in his accomplishments are more than \$15 million dollars in construction and renovations across the five campuses.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Chancellor James McCormick said, "President Wood has been a visionary leader in meeting the challenges unique to higher education institutions located in sparsely populated rural areas. He has been an innovator and a champion of distance and online education. We appreciate his 10 years of service to Minnesota West, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, and the people of Minnesota." The process of selecting a replacement for President Wood has begun with anticipated applicant screening to be held in mid-January and interviews tentatively scheduled for March.

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## *President's Forum*

By Ronald A. Wood, President, Minnesota West Community and Technical College

Ten years have sped by! On June 30th of 2008 I will retire as President of Minnesota West Community and Technical College. The ten years have been a period of unprecedented change for the College. In 1998 upon arrival the name Minnesota West was an unknown. The College was in its infancy, only forming from the merger in 1997 of Southwestern Technical College and Worthington Community College - two institutions with long and separate histories. Ten years later the College has emerged from infancy and adolescence to young adulthood. The change process has brought about a new culture.

The College has maintained its strong liberal arts and technical components but has integrated them throughout all five campuses. It has accomplished this by becoming one of the most advanced technology users in the country as recognized by the American Association of Community Colleges through the national awards given for "Digital Excellence." Today over twenty seven percent of the College course work is completed on-line and an additional fourteen

percent is completed through a hybrid mix of interactive TV and Internet teaching. This flexibility has opened education to individuals throughout the southwest region.

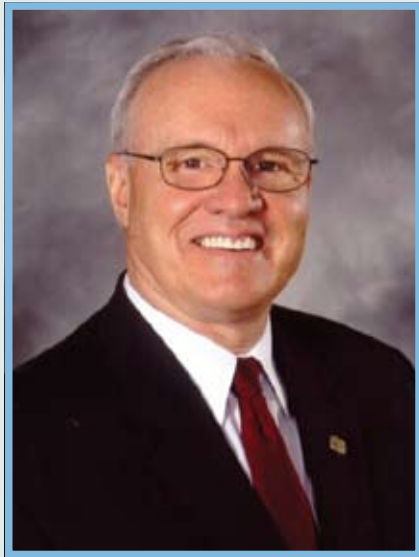
As we matured, we also have better recognized the needs of not only our campus communities but also the region and nation. Today we are leaders in alternative energy fields of wind and ethanol using both traditional and on-line teaching methods. Numerous industry, education and government partnerships have been established that ensure the College and region will remain a strong economic force in determining future directions. Part of this has been the establishment of the Minnesota Energy Enterprise Center in Granite Falls to foster not only the expansion of our existing programs but the growth into new areas.

Living in an area in which the gifts of nature provide much of the value added economics we have also moved into the area of biological laboratory technology. We have formed great partnerships to take advantage of the emerging technology in agriculture bio-lab technology. Our students are trained on state of the art equipment in an industry lab as well as the Worthington campus lab to become bio-lab technicians. We have also found that these relationships allow us to train health care individuals such as Medical Lab Technicians on the same equipment. This has been a great bonus to our students.

The third major movement has been in the health field. With a graying population, the need to provide quality health care will escalate over the next several decades. The College has expanded its Nursing program over the last decade across the entire region through the use of its technology. We were recognized by the US Department of Labor several years ago for our methods and success in this effort. But nursing was not the only pending health care crisis area. We have added programs through partnerships with health care providers in radiography and surgical technology. This fall we opened these programs in the former Luverne General Hospital in partnership with the City of Luverne and the Sanford Health System.

The beauty of all of the above is that it requires the College to maintain strong and viable programs in the technical area and liberal arts area. The new, emerging careers require the knowledge base of a wide array of fields. So in the process of adding new areas we strengthen a cross section of existing programs!

It has been an exciting ten years. Many things have happened to move us forward, but it is now time for new eyes and new energy to take the College to the next level. **MY ONLY REQUEST OF ALUMNI AND FRIENDS IS THAT YOU HELP THE NEXT PRESIDENT MOVE THIS GREAT INSTITUTION TO THE NEXT LEVEL!** You have been strong supporters of the College in the past and I am confident you will continue to assist us in the future.



The Minnesota West Foundation Board of Directors and staff extend a very sincere and spirited thank you to all of our donors. Our scholarship programs continue to thrive and expand with each passing year. Scholarships are an investment in a student's future, enabling them to take advantage of the lifelong benefits that come with achieving an education

With the College, Foundation and our donors in partnership - we truly help many students pursue their educational dreams. Please consider our recent history of awarding scholarships . . .

◆ For Fall semester 2007, the College and Foundation awarded \$165,000 in scholarships!

◆ During the 2006-2007 academic year (Fall & Spring Semesters), the College and Foundation awarded \$204,589.00 in scholarships!

◆ During the 2005-2006 academic year (Fall & Spring Semesters), the College and Foundation awarded \$188,209.00 in scholarships!

The above numbers are very impressive. However, the Foundation would not be able to offer an increasing number of scholarships each year without the steadfast support of partners such as The Schwan Food Company.

In 2007, The Schwan Food Company put forth a Challenge Grant and generously agreed to contribute \$1 for every \$2 donated to the Foundation from January 15 through November 30th. The Foundation's goal was to raise \$100,000 to receive the maximum gift of \$50,000 from The Schwan Food Company.

**Thanks to the effort of everyone (businesses, alumni, friends, Minnesota West employees and community organizations) the Minnesota West Foundation did indeed meet the 2007 Challenge Grant goal.**

And . . . based on this success, a 2008 Challenge Grant has been issued by The Schwan Food Company. This Challenge runs from January 15 through November 30, 2008!

On behalf of the Foundation, we thank all who have contributed in the past and encourage your continued support with our upcoming Challenge Grant fundraising efforts.

And don't forget - a matching gift can double, sometimes triple, your gift to the Minnesota West Foundation. To find out if your employer (or spouse's employer) has a matching gift program, and what its policies entail, please go to [www.matchinggift.com](http://www.matchinggift.com)

## ◆◆◆ *New Features on the Foundation web page*

### **Alumni Updating:**

Are you an alumnus of Minnesota West? Check out our newly revised "Alumni Profile Update" tool at . . . <http://www.mnwest.edu/alumni/address-update/>

This new feature provides Minnesota West and the Foundation with the ability to more accurately track our alumni by program, home campus, grad year, and maiden name in an effort to keep YOU better informed about our events and activities! Let's keep in touch - take a couple of minutes to update your information!

### **Donors Listed on the Website:**

As of July 1, 2007, the Minnesota West Foundation now publicly recognizes our donors via the web. You can find the donor page at <http://www.mnwest.edu/foundation/donors/>

The donor list provides the name of the donor(s) and a hometown.

Business/Industry

Community Members

Faculty & Staff

Board of Directors

OUR STUDENTS

## ◆◆◆ The Schwan Food Company Scholarship Recipients for Fall, 2007

The following students earned a Schwan Food Company Scholarship this fall:

◆ Robbie Vierhout of Hull, IA  
Robbie is enrolled as an Automotive Technology major on the Jackson Campus

◆ Danielle Arndt of Jasper, MN  
Danielle is enrolled as a Receptionist program major on the Pipestone Campus

◆ Rebecca Froehlich of Murdock, MN  
Rebecca is enrolled as a Dental Assisting major on the Canby Campus

◆ Rachel Gervais of Currie, MN  
Rachel is enrolled as an Accounting major on the Worthington Campus

◆ Whitney Seifert of Morgan, MN  
Whitney is enrolled as a Medical Administrative Secretary major on the Granite Falls Campus



Robbie



Danielle



Rebecca



Rachel



Whitney

## ◆◆◆ Minnesota West Student Places at National Competition

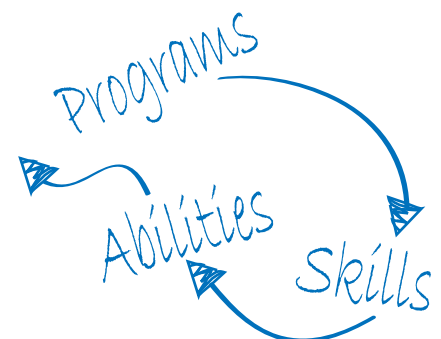
On June 25-29 the 43rd Annual National Leadership and Skills Conference was held in Kansas City, MO. Over 5,000 career and technical

education students competed in eighty-four different trade areas at the SkillsUSA Championships. Taking 5th place in the nation was Westbrook, MN native and Canby Campus student Jordan Dibble. Dibble earned his trip to the National SkillsUSA Championships by claiming first place in the Industrial Motor Controls competition at the state level in March, 2007. He again competed in the Industrial Motor Controls competition in Kansas City, and was given 5th place honors. Dibble graduated with honors from the Canby Campus Electrician program on May 9, 2007.

stated "We were very excited to learn that Jordan finished in 5th place in the Nation! It says a lot for Jordan's skills and also for our Electrician program at Minnesota West. We couldn't be more pleased." Electrical Instructor Jim Brewers has been the advisor for Canby Campus Chapter of SkillsUSA for the last eleven years. The purpose of the SkillsUSA competition is to give students a chance to test their abilities against students from different colleges throughout Minnesota and the nation.



The Minnesota West - Canby Campus SkillsUSA advisor Jim Brewers, who made the trip with Dibble,



## ◆◆◆ *Fluid Power Technology Students top in the State!*

The Granite Falls Campus is proud of second year Fluid Power Technology students Cory Zwilling of Foley, Minnesota and Nathan Goblish of Marshall, Minnesota placing first and second, respectively, in the 2007 Minnesota Fluid Power Skills Competition.

The annual Skills Competition is a tough competition that brings exceptional students from each of the four technical colleges in the State of Minnesota providing 2-year Fluid Power programs to this state level competition.

The competition is divided into four distinct sections; the written test, fitting identification, troubleshooting and a special challenge. The written test is similar to those used for the hydraulic and pneumatic specialist certification. The fitting identification consists of a physical display of a variety of fittings that the contestants are required to identify. The troubleshooting portion consists of one of the judges acting as a customer with a problem with a hydraulic or pneumatic circuit or component. The contestant is then required to solve the problem in a difficult face to face setting. The special challenge

is a challenging hands-on category allowing more time to solve. It consists of a written description of how a circuit should function, the participants are then required to draw the circuit and plumb and/or wire the actual components so the system functions per the written specifications. The entire competition lasts 3 ½ hours and provides an excellent way for the contestants to determine their areas of strength as well as areas that need additional focus.

Students from Minnesota West's Fluid Power Technology program consistently finish high in this competition, taking 23 out of the top 50 spots over the past ten years.



Engage → Improve → Build



## ◆◆◆ *Renewable Energy Technology Student Earns National Scholarship*

Renewable Energy Technology student Dawn Anderson, of Granite Falls, was awarded the prestigious BBI International 2007 Fuel Ethanol Workshop Scholarship, one of only three awarded nationally to students pursuing careers in the ethanol industry.

This past fall, Dawn began her second year of study in Minnesota West's Renewable

Energy Technology program. The award provided a \$5,000 academic scholarship, as well as an all-expense paid trip for Dawn and the other scholarship recipients to the 2007 International Fuel Ethanol Workshop held June, 2007 in St. Louis, Missouri, where she attended courses and workshops and officially received her scholarship.



# what's new at minnesota west?

## ◆◆◆ *A New Office for Customized Training Services!*

Customized Training Services moved to a new office location in July, 2007. The new office is located on the first floor of the Lyon County Government Center on Main Street in Marshall.

Customized Training/Continuing Education offers a wide array of training programs delivered during the day, evenings, and weekends. The training is delivered on-site, on any of the Minnesota West campuses, at the training center in Marshall, or at convenient community meeting locations

throughout Southwest Minnesota. Our training programs concentrate on six primary service areas:

- ◆ Computer Technology
- ◆ Emergency Response & Industrial Safety
- ◆ Manufacturing & Applied Technology
- ◆ Management & Professional Development
- ◆ Public Safety

Customized Training Services design and develop specialized training programs tailored to meet the specific needs of our customers.

Technology

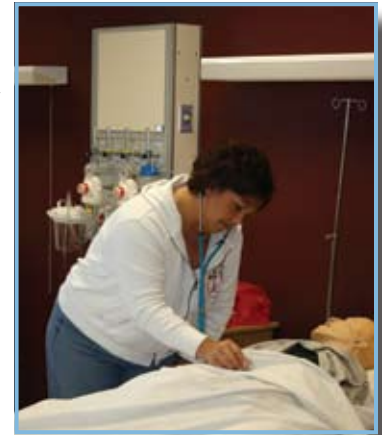
Resources

## ◆◆◆ *New Lab at Pipestone*

A long overdue face lift came to the Pipestone Campus Nursing labs this past summer. Instructional staff states that the best part of the remodeled labs is the head panels with oxygen and suction simulators. This creates a more realistic setting for students to learn procedures and ready them for clinical settings. Along with the head panels the lab acquired a pulse oximeter which reads the oxygen levels of a patient through the fingertip.

The 'new' lab now has added bed space, new privacy curtains,

flooring, and a permanent wall was built between the two labs. Also the aging windows and heating economizer were replaced. The Pipestone Campus faculty members are excited about the make over which creates a more comprehensive learning experience for nursing and nurse aid students.



## ◆◆◆ *New Facilities at Granite*

The newly completed auditorium at the Granite Falls campus seats over 100 people and it provides a much needed space for student recruitment events, classes, and community activities.

## ◆◆◆ *New Commercial Wiring Lab at Jackson*

### **ALUMNUS COMES BACK TO TEACH THE NEXT GENERATION OF ELECTRICIANS**

It was the students and the circumstances of life that brought Rob Arp back to the Jackson Campus. As a 1991 graduate of the electrician program, Arp went on to work as a journeyman, electrician and eventually a business owner.

How did the 1991 Jackson Campus grad end up back at his Alma matter? "It was a combination of things," Arp explained. A teaching position opened up at Jackson in the electrician program in

2003 at the same time that his wife Holli accepted the job of Regional Director with the University of Minnesota Extension. He added, "The move has been good for our family and for me. I enjoy teaching. It has always been the students that keep me in front of the class. I like watching the students' progress and ultimate success in the field."

Arp is excited to talk about the commercial wiring lab that is currently under construction for

*continued on next page*

People

Knowledge

# what's new at minnesota west?

the second year electrician class. He noted, "The students will benefit from a more practical hands-on experience. As they graduate, our students may very well be involved with repair work and troubleshooting in factories and office buildings or may choose to work in an industrial manufacturing sector where they work with machines and other large equipment. This lab is being designed to give them experience they need as they begin their electrical career. Students are sure to benefit from the enhancement."

## Bluejay Health Watch Website Available

The Bluejay Health Watch went live on August 1st. This site is intended as a service to the Minnesota West community (students, staff, faculty, parents) and the general public. The Bluejay Health Watch provides credible and reliable health information with special focus on health promotion and disease prevention.

The site provides links to medical resources that are located in close proximity to our campuses, and links to local, state, and federal web sites that provide health information. In addition, the site features monthly health and wellness articles. The Hot Topics link will be utilized to inform and educate the public of immediate health concerns.

The website link was funded through an Award of Excellence project. Diane Vangsness and Karen Wiltrot, Minnesota West nursing instructors, developed the site. The two faculty members wanted to provide a health service to students and noted that their "passion for healthcare" was the basis of the site. Vangsness and Wiltrot are also collaborating with other universities to share topics that are beneficial to college students.

You will find the link by going to [www.mnwest.edu](http://www.mnwest.edu) and then clicking on the College Services Tab and choosing Health Watch in the drop down menu. New topics will be posted monthly.



## what can minnesota west do for you?

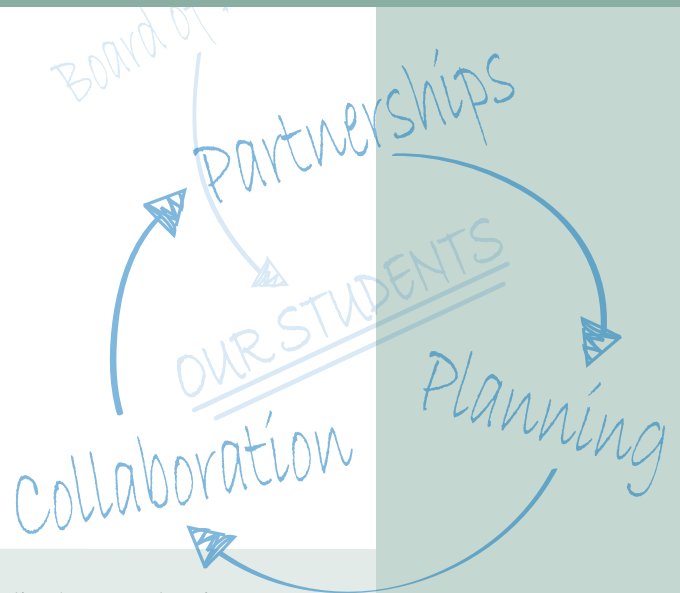
## Career Services Available

The Minnesota West Career Center prepares students for the job market, connecting them with leading employers. The professionals from Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Inc. provide career and employment solutions for students and alumni through the Career Center from mid-September through June on each of the five campuses of Minnesota West.

Services that the Career Center offers for students and alumni include . . .

- ◆ Individualized career planning
- ◆ Drop-in career counseling
- ◆ Workshops on career and job search topics like resume writing and interviewing skills
- ◆ Assistance with internship placement

Employers – don't forget – you can post your job listings with the Career Center as well!



# faculty focus

Technology → Resources → Relationships → People →



*Dr. Dan Prust and Teresa Noyes display their “tools of the trade” in the newly remodeled Dental Assisting Clinic.*

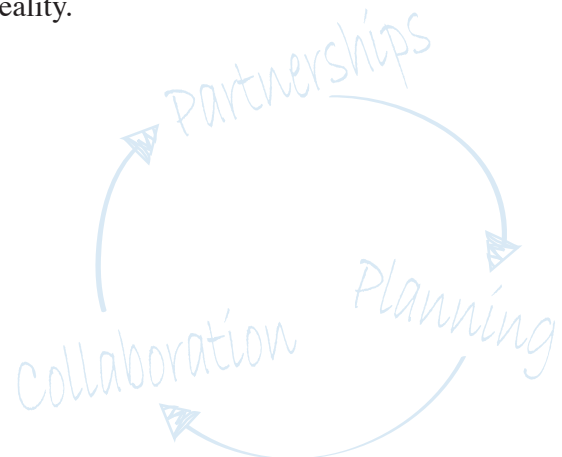
## ◆◆◆ *After 10 years, Dr. Prust still Smiles!*

Dr. Dan Prust has been teaching students how to preserve smiles for the past ten years. His Minnesota West career began in 1997 when he was hired as a consultant for the Dental Assisting program located on the Canby Campus. His job description soon changed as he was hired as the Dental Assisting Program Director in 1998. Throughout his ten years on the Canby Campus, Dr. Prust’s most memorable moments not only involve his students, but little patients as well. The Minnesota Dental Association sponsors ‘Give Kids a Smile’ Day each year. This event is particularly special to Dr. Prust as it involves current Dental Assisting students, other local Dentists, and usually around 50 small children. The children, ranging in age from 4-6 years old, come to the Clinic each

year to learn about going to the Dentist and the importance of brushing their teeth. Dr. Prust quoted, “It is great to see how our students interact with the kids . . . they really show you how much they have learned throughout the year.”

Dr. Prust began his career in 1973 when he graduated with a Doctor of Dental Surgery Degree from Ohio State University. He then began working for the United States Public Health Service/Indian Health Service. He spent twenty years working at the Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Reservation in Sisseton, SD and at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in Pine Ridge, SD. After his retirement from Public Health, Dr. Prust pursued a Masters Degree in Counseling & Human Resources from South Dakota State University, graduating in 1996. He has been a faculty member at Minnesota West ever since.

Dr. Prust has had many career highlights over his ten years here. But, the one that comes to mind most often is the renovation of the Dental Assisting Clinic in 2004. The vintage 1970’s style clinic was completely renovated, leaving behind a state of the art facility which houses twelve dental chairs, X-Ray equipment, a dark room, and more. Both he and Dental Assisting Instructor, Teresa Noyes, are extremely proud of the facility they worked very hard to make a reality.





Knowledge → Technology → Resources → Relationships

## ◆◆ Automotive Instructor not only Innovative in the Classroom

As an instructor who is constantly changing the delivery of the program's curriculum to keep his students engaged, Doug Kleeberger also shows no lack of innovation in creating an office space that catches the eye of all who have the chance to see it. Along with a spotless lab, which is maintained with assigned tasks to students, Kleeberger is a model of enthusiasm in the classroom.



Kleeberger tells his students, as they sit and talk about the newly finished desk, he decided to paint his desk to make it look nicer, but didn't like the shade of red he had picked so he wanted to do something else to the desk. "One thing led to another and the rest is history," Kleeberger said. "I just wanted to be different and it turned out quite different." He said the desk and the other office renovations (including the floor and painting the walls) became a family project, as his wife, kids, and dad all helped out at various times.

Kleeberger is an automotive instructor at Minnesota West - Jackson and is in his fifth year with the college. The Minnesota West Automotive Technology program is certified by National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) and the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).

Planning

Engage → Improve → Build

# new programs, partnerships & projects



## ◆◆ Automotive Technology – Canby Campus

The newest program to hit the Canby Campus really isn't new at all. The Automotive Technology Program has been training students on the Canby Campus for many years. However, in the last year the curriculum has undergone a facelift of sorts. In the fall of 2007, the first students began in the new 3 semester program. Instructor Chuck Knollenberg worked to re-configure his program to better meet the needs of his students. Chuck now offers students the chance to graduate with a Diploma in Automotive Technology in just 3 semesters. Of course, the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Automotive Technology is still offered, but may take students up to four semesters to complete. Within the new 3 semester program, students complete one certificate each semester, along with the required Internship over the summer.

## ◆◆ Minnesota West Benefits from \$5 Million Federal Project for Renewable Energy Labor Force

Minnesota West is one of two key higher education partners leading implementation of a \$5-million, three-year federal grant to enhance the renewable energy labor force in southwest and west-central Minnesota. The U.S. Department of Labor grant, intended to encourage workers to stay in rural Minnesota, was announced by U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao this past summer. It is one of 13 recent grants awarded by the Labor Department's Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) program.

The grant was received by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Southwest Workforce Council. Minnesota West and Minnesota State University - Mankato will lead other higher education partners to develop training for new workers in emerging bioscience and renewable energy industries.

The grant's focus is the labor force in a 36-county "Ag Innovation Triangle" from Norman and Rock counties on the west to Freeborn County on the east. The area includes 85 percent of the

state's renewable energy projects, including 14 ethanol plants, three bio-diesel plants and 53 wind turbine farms. Chao said a key reason Minnesota was selected for the grant is its "25 by 25" goal: 25 percent of the state's energy from renewable sources by 2025. She said the goal creates a "tremendous array of partners" to offer new skilled, knowledge-based jobs in rural communities.

"This grant is about providing the catalyst to bring together industries and education to develop the human resources necessary to serve this growing industry. This is not just about creating jobs but also wealth in our region of the state," adds Dennis Hampel, Minnesota West Dean of Career and Technical Programs.

Minnesota West President Dr. Ron Wood stated, "The grant also demonstrates continued partnerships between Minnesota West, Southwest Workforce Council and MSU-Mankato. The combination of partnership brings together an unbelievably strong group of agencies and institutions that will share ideas to make for a stronger economy and work environment. This particular grant

provides the opportunity for Minnesota West and MSU Mankato to take not just southwest Minnesota and Minnesota to the next level of developing renewable energy but to the nation as a whole."

Minnesota West has several grants and contracts to assist with training programs and this grant will further enhance those opportunities. Minnesota West offers programs in wind energy, bio diesel, and ethanol, as well as, the latest endeavors to include bio mass and solar energy. "Minnesota West has recognized for a long time that after a long period of renewable energy research that a need existed to prepare a skilled workforce. We have reached a critical point where workers are needed in renewable energy fields to move the industry forward and create energy independence. This grant provides a clear opportunity to turn towards application of skill sets and create a balance between research and developing a skilled work force," said Wood.

## ◆◆◆ *Foundation Grain Exchange Program allows Farmers to Donate Grain for Scholarships*

Under a new program, entitled the Grain Exchange, farmers can donate a portion of the grain hauled to elevators toward scholarships for students at Minnesota West.

According to Erlin Weness, Agricultural Tax Advisor . . .

“Since the Minnesota West Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, giving to this entity provides farmers who donate grain with certain tax advantages. Gifting grain to a charitable organization can be a very viable and desirable option for cash method farm proprietors. Farmers cannot claim the commodity gift as an itemized deduction, but sidestep both the income tax and Social Security tax on donated commodities by not having to include them on the Schedule F.”

Under the Grain Exchange program, farmers can earmark bushels of grain to the Minnesota Foundation. The Foundation will then sell the grain and utilize the proceeds for student scholarships. Donors may designate their grain contribution to support the Campus and/or program of their choice.

“I just think that this has tremendous opportunity for our programs at all five of our campuses,” stated President Ron Wood when the program was announced in mid-October on the farm of John Widboom located in rural Worthington.

The Grain Exchange program was piloted at the Worthington Campus with grain donations specifically targeted to provide scholarships to students in Ag or Bio-Tech majors. Rolf Mahlberg, Minnesota West Ag instructor and a Grain Exchange participant said the program offers farmers a way to show their support for students.

“I have between 30 and 40 Ag majors now - I’m thrilled with the numbers that we have, it’s one of the biggest classes ever,” said Mahlberg. “With the cost of education and textbooks now, we’re looking to support these young, enthusiastic agriculture majors with financial support from the Ag community.”

Minnesota West Foundation Liaison Board Members Wayne Klumper and Matt Widboom co-chair the Grain Exchange program.

“It’s a great way to involve rural America in giving,” said Klumper. “A lot of people solicit businesses and Main Street, and those people are always willing to give and help out, and I think

sometimes we forget that here in the country we have a lot of businesses - some of these farms are very big businesses. All of the donated grain will be marketed specifically to fund scholarships, and farmers can donate to the Grain Exchange any time during the year,” Klumper said.

The first scholarships developed from the Grain Exchange program will likely be awarded next fall according to President Ron Wood.

“The scholarship awards will be dependent on the amount of beans or corn that come in to the Foundation,” said Wood. “If we got 150 farm families that participate in this (at 100 bushels per family) we probably could have 10 or 15 scholarships each year.”

Farmers who wish to contribute to the Grain Exchange program may choose the campus in which they would like their grain donation to be designated. Farmers who want to join the Bushel Club may contact Julie Stevenson, Executive Director of the Minnesota West Foundation, for more information.



*Announcing the Grain Exchange program, from the steps of a combine, are John Widboom, Rolf Mahlberg, Wayne Klumper, and Dr. Wood*

*Consider  
making the  
greatest impact  
imaginable by  
giving the gift  
of grain to the  
Minnesota West  
Foundation*

## ◆◆◆ *New Initiatives: Fast Track*

In an effort to help ensure that first-year students are adequately prepared for collegiate course work, Minnesota West initiated a college wide Fast Track program this past fall on all five of its campuses. The Fast Track program was piloted on one campus prior to fall semester, 2006. The goal of this project was to better prepare students for a successful college experience with particular focus on reading, writing, math, and study skills.

On four of the Minnesota West campuses, this pre-first year seminar was held over eight days, two weeks prior to the start of fall semester, with a maximum possible enrollment of 30 students. The students met with instructors four days a week and had one day of online/LARC work, which was also instructor led.

While historically most students at Minnesota West have received a one day orientation prior to starting college, this session covered mostly administrative information and not academic and life skills. The Fast Track course was designed to give students the specific tools for success before they began college-level courses. This program was offered for 2 credits. Students did not pay for the credit thanks to the support of many project partners and funders.

According to Minnesota West Provost, Dr. Diane Graber, "A significant part of the efforts with this project involve working with area high schools to identify students who would benefit from the program, as well as share information gathered regarding high school students, placement scores, and developmental programs. This is an ongoing effort at Minnesota West, and we have been working with the Southwest West Central Service Cooperative over the past several years."

Kayla Westra, Fast Track Project Director, provided a few of the key areas of impact demonstrated through this project:

- ◆ Students developed an early connection with faculty, students,

facilities, technical support, staff, student services, and the Library and Academic Resource Center (LARC)

- ◆ After just eight days of instruction, students showed substantial improvement in performance and positive feedback.
- ◆ Students showed a positive attitude and worked well with one another.
- ◆ Students assessed and personalized goals for the course.
- ◆ Students practiced time management skills. They were consistently in the classroom and working on outcomes.
- ◆ Students gained experience learning in an ITV environment.

In addition to meeting academic goals, Westra commented on other areas of student growth witnessed by faculty and staff working with this program, "It's hard to measure assuredness and self-confidence, but the instructors can feel and see the different attitudes the student participants have demonstrated toward the college and their collegiate goals overall upon completion of the Fast Track program."

Key to the success of this program is student mentors who assist. Valentino Williams is one Fast Track student who attended the pilot project in 2006, and returned in 2007 to help mentor incoming students.

According to Valentino, "Coming into college a year after graduating from high school was tough, but the Fast Track course helped me get on the right path with my classes. I learned new ways to solve problems and became a better test taker because I developed improved study skills. As a mentor for the Fast Track program the following year, I helped

students learn the same skills that I had. Some students asked me questions about the program. They wanted to know what the classes were like. I let them know the program was there to prepare them for classes in the fall and that the instructors are easy to talk to if you have any problems anytime. It was good to be amongst my student peers and let them know they were doing the right thing by going to college and gaining the necessary skills to be successful."

## ◆◆◆ *40 Houses Strong at Pipestone's Carpentry Program*

The Pipestone Campus Carpentry program is well on its way in completing its 40th project house. The project house is the ultimate hands-on learning tool not only for the Carpentry students but also for the Plumbing and HVAC students on the Pipestone Campus. A few of the interesting features of this 1800 + square foot home include an octagon dining area, large cedar deck, gas fireplace that is visible from both the living room and master bedroom, vaulted ceilings, and builder Greek castle stone on the front face. Students will complete the project by the middle of February.



## ◆◆◆ *Minnesota West Website Recognized at Conference*

Minnesota West's website received the Silver Award at the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations District V Conference this past fall when awards were presented at the annual conference in Davenport, Iowa. District V is made up of two-year colleges from Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, Missouri and Manitoba Canada. Minnesota two-year colleges did well at the annual competition garnering 33 awards for excellence.



Engage → Improve → Build

## ◆◆◆ *Minnesota West Receives National Recognition for Digital Education*

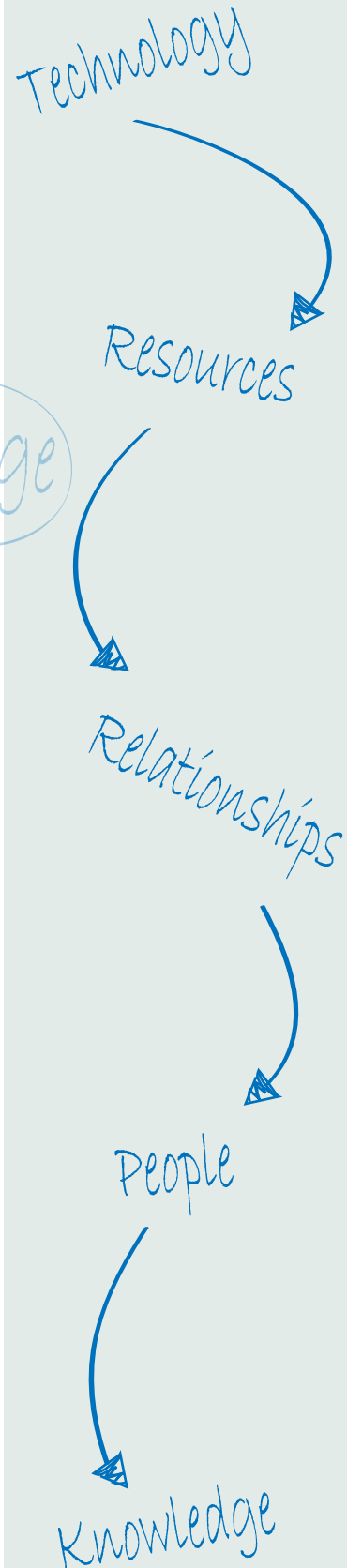
Minnesota West tied for 5th place in the nation as a digitally savvy community college as named by the Center for Digital Education and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). The Center for Digital Education established the ranking based upon the third national Digital Community Colleges Survey. The survey examines how colleges are deploying technology to streamline operations and better serve their students, faculty and staff. Minnesota West has been ranked in the top ten small colleges category in all three years of the award.

More than 200 community colleges across the county participated in the survey. Colleges were grouped into three categories; small, mid-sized, and large colleges. Community college officials responded to a set of multiple choice and narrative questions regarding online services and technology provisions offered to students, faculty and communities. Colleges provided Web site addresses and background data for final verification. Minnesota West was the only Minnesota State Colleges and Universities institution to be recognized by the Center for Digital Education.

According to John Roos, Minnesota West Director of Technology, "With five campuses and three learning sites situated across SW Minnesota, technology is paramount to our success. It helps to keep the campuses/sites connected and creates a one college atmosphere between, faculty and students. It is great honor for the college and demonstrates Minnesota West's determination to remain a technology leader in education."

"Once again, the community colleges are implementing innovative projects and programs with technology that are setting new standards for post-secondary education," said Marina Leight, Vice President of the Center for Digital Education. "This year's winners have made a resounding commitment to improved delivery of services to students as well as leading the way for rich learning environments designed to make a difference in a student's career."

Currently, 22.7% of all enrollment at Minnesota West is Internet based.



# notable news and events

Business/Industry

Community Members

## ◆◆ Foreman shares message with Minnesota West

While each school he speaks at might offer a different challenge, former Vikings' all-pro running back Chuck Foreman always delivers the same message: "Get the most out of the education offered to you, and live up to your potential." Foreman talked with students at the five campuses of Minnesota West

Minnesota West operates in Southwest Minnesota as well as the vast programming available through our College. Chuck stated that community and technical colleges play an important part in the educational life of today's students, especially for those students who are not ready to jump directly into a 4 year college after high school."



According to Thomas Williams, Minnesota West's Minority Affairs Director, "Mr. Foreman was very impressed with the number of campuses



## ◆◆ Save a Life Tour held on Worthington Campus

The Worthington Campus recently hosted the national Save a Life Tour for Minnesota West students as well as area high school students. The Save a Life tour is a program designated to discuss alcohol awareness and the dangers of drinking and driving. The program features a simulator that allows students to drive a car that is "under the influence of alcohol". The event also included a presentation by a young man that lost a friend in an alcohol related incident.

## ◆◆ Donation of Art



Growing up on a farm in Iowa, the young Bob Artley not only had prowess milking a cow but could skillfully draw any bovine's likeness with a pencil and paper. Bob Artley's career as an editorial cartoonist began with the "Des Moines

The Artley family generously donated 851 original editorial cartoons to the Minnesota West Foundation. In addition to receiving the bulk of Bob's original drawings, the Foundation was also given 6 water colors on a permanent loan basis. The Artley family is thrilled that Bob's work will be featured on all five of the Minnesota West campuses and be utilized in various educational settings.

Tribune" and continued at the "Worthington Daily Globe," where he launched his syndicated cartoon series "Memories of a Former Kid." This long-lived series of autobiographical drawings continues to be syndicated in daily and weekly newspapers yet today.

Minnesota West will host an Art Opening to feature the donated drawings and watercolors in September, 2008 to coincide with Turkey Day Weekend in Worthington.

## ◆◆ Fenstermacher Donates Grand Piano to Worthington Campus

Dorothy Fenstermacher, a long-time Worthington area community member and friend of the College, has graced the Worthington Campus with the donation of her Chickering baby grand piano. The sheer beauty of the piano with its intricate woodwork is striking and the sound quality is exceptional. Dorothy was looking for a "home" for the baby grand when she moved into a retirement

dwelling and felt that the Worthington Campus would appreciate the piano as much as she did. The piano was dedicated at the "Razzle Dazzle Musicale" concert last spring. Dorothy's donation was truly a gift from the heart and the Worthington Campus is very appreciative of her generous contribution to benefit our fine arts educational endeavors.



Board of Directors

OUR STUDENTS

## ◆◆◆ *New Truck – New Graphics!*

The Biodiesel truck that was donated to the Diesel Technology program by the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association and the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council (MSR&PC) recently received a new look. A new graphic design highlights both the Diesel Technology and Renewable Energy programs at Minnesota West. The new graphics were made possible with a \$500 donation from the MSR&PC!

The Canby Campus received the 1998 Dodge pickup from the MSR&PC to use as an educational tool. The Dodge pickup has been running on various blends of biodiesel, from additive products up to B20, for nearly all of its 300,000 miles.

“This pickup was the first biodiesel demonstration pickup in the state and it played an important role in moving biodiesel forward,” said David Fier, soybean producer from Taunton, MN and a member of the Board of Directors of the MSR&PC.

Diesel Technology Instructor Peter Girard is thrilled with the added hands-on learning opportunities the Dodge pickup provides for his students. “This will be the first engine my students can work on that has been exclusively run on biodiesel fuel.” Girard states his students will dive into the Cummins Diesel Engine to conduct



useful tests and learn more about vehicle. Students will then gather their observations and provide a detailed analysis of the engine's condition to MSR&PC. The report will supply MSR&PC with important information about biodiesel's effects on engine wear and other performance issues.

## ◆◆◆ *Machine Tool Technology Alum named President of Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association*

Mike Yeager, a 1986 graduate of the Machine Tool Technology program at the Granite Falls Campus was recently named President of the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association (MPMA). Yeager owns his own machining company called Yeager Machine in Waconia, Minnesota.

In speaking of his goals as President of the MPMA, Yeager states “I hope to grow the organization and the trusting nature that resides within.” In his speech at the October 24th MPMA event, Yeager

spoke of trust amidst the members of MPMA and the importance of manufacturing in the economy. Yeager also challenges all in the manufacturing industry today to develop relationships with high schools to re-establish the importance of manufacturing careers and the great opportunities that manufacturing industries provide to students. Yeager stated, “Manufacturing provides steady, high paying jobs, paying an average of 50% more than the retail sector. Those of us in the manufacturing sector create wealth. Manufacturing and innovation are inseparable.”

## alumni notes



## ◆◆◆ *Computer Careers Instructor (Alum) Honored by Peers*

Computer Careers instructor Terri Pelzel was honored by her peers with a plaque for her years of service on the Business of Professionals of America Board (BPA). Terri served on the state board for six years and was chairman for last two. The plaque was presented at the College Division/Professional Development Conference in Alexandria, MN in October, 2007. She and her students joined over 160 other conference delegates from the across the state to participate in the general sessions, workshops and state officer candidate campaigns and elections. BPA is contributing to

the preparation of a world-class workforce through the advancement of leadership, citizenship, academic, and technological skills. Terri is the advisor/instructor for the programs of Computer Engineering Technology, Computer Maintenance/Repair and Networking Specialist at the Jackson Campus. Terri is a Minnesota West alumnus who graduated in 1985 from the Jackson Campus in the Accounting program.

She earned a BS degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Information Technology.



# alumni notes

## *Ryan Kronebusch – Selling hockey in the desert*

- ◆ Owatonna High School Grad
- ◆ Minnesota West Grad - Associate in Arts Degree
- ◆ Winona State Grad - BS in Business Administration Degree

My experience at Minnesota West was wonderful. I came into college thinking that I wanted to pursue a career in pharmacy, but after one semester I quickly realized that it wasn't something about which I was passionate. After taking some business and economics courses, I soon came to realize that it was the field in which I wanted to earn my degree. I finished my AA degree at Minnesota West and transferred to Winona State University.

The transfer from Minnesota West to Winona State was very smooth. My Counselor, Cheryl Avenel Navara, was very helpful in walking me through the transfer process and my credits transferred easily. I entered Winona's College of Business and soon realized that I wanted to pursue a career in sales & marketing. Being an athlete growing up, I always wanted to be involved in professional sports. Since my dream of being a professional athlete was not realized (ha ha) I decided to pursue a job with a professional sports organization.

In my last semester at Winona State I applied to participate in the NBA job Fair in Chicago. I was 1 of 120 chosen from 1,500 applicants for this 3 day event, I was extremely lucky. I got 3 interviews at the job fair, but was not hired. A couple weeks later I received a call from the Phoenix Coyotes (NHL) for an interview. One week later I was offered a job as an Inside Sales Representative. After some consideration, I accepted the position. It was a great feeling to have a job lined up a month before I was scheduled to graduate. I graduated on May 4, 2007 with a B.S. Business Administration. A few weeks later I moved to Glendale, AZ and started my new job.

As an Inside Sales Representative, I am responsible for selling and servicing new accounts as well as creating new ideas to increase ticket sales. I absolutely love my job and love this industry. I get to sell sports entertainment to people! I have always loved sports, and I think you really have to believe in what you sell to succeed.

Selling hockey in the desert isn't the easiest thing. I expected that coming in though, that's one of the reasons I wanted this job. There is a lot more opportunity to increase attendance and grow here versus a team that



has a strong hockey market and already has high attendance. I would really like to someday work in a management role with the Minnesota Wild.

This connection with people, along with the fact that two Hall of Famers are coaches for the Coyotes (Head Coach Wayne Gretzky and Goalies Coach Grant Fuhr), makes this a pretty amazing job. The first time I got to meet Coach Gretzky and Coach Fuhr was a pretty memorable moment for me, as I grew up playing hockey and remember watching both of them play. I was a huge Wayne Gretzky fan growing up so it is a privilege to work for a team where he is the head coach.

In all of this I still think back and know that I would not be where I am today if I had not attended Minnesota West. That's where the "Puck Dropped" and I began a new phase in my life. I am very grateful for all of the instructors and coaches at Minnesota West that I had the privilege of learning from and playing under.



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