

Staying Connected



June 2009

A newsletter for the alumni & friends of Minnesota West Community & Technical College

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The Minnesota West Foundation is a private non-profit, 501 (c)3 tax exempt organization.

The Minnesota West Foundation believes in affordable and accessible educational opportunities for students. Because of this belief and commitment to education, the Minnesota West Foundation provides funding for scholarships and development opportunities for the students attending Minnesota West Community and Technical College.



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Minnesota West Graduates Over 700 Students in May Ceremonies

“Graduation is the time for us all to gather and celebrate not only the accomplishments of our graduates, but also the collective good will that we share throughout our region.”

– Dr. Ric Shrubb, President

Minnesota West Community and Technical College graduated a total of 737 students from the five campuses of the college.

The Canby Campus graduated fifty-one students in nine different program areas. The commencement speaker was Canby Mayor, **Gene Bies** while **Trevor Humphrey**, an electrician graduate, gave the student address.

The Granite Falls Campus graduated one hundred and thirty-three students in thirty-one different program areas. The commencement speaker was Granite Falls Mayor, **Dave Smiglewski** while **Jamie Olerud**, a graduate in receptionist, medical administrative secretary and medical coding specialist, gave the student address.

The Jackson Campus graduated one hundred and twenty-eight students in about fifteen different programs. The commencement

speaker was **Dr. Jeff Williamson**, Minnesota West Vice-President of Instruction, while **Adam LeClaire**, student senate president, spoke on behalf of the students.

The Pipestone Campus graduated one hundred and eleven students in twenty-seven different program areas. The commencement speaker was **Dr. Diane Graber**, Minnesota West Provost, while **Debbie Handberg**, a medical administrative secretary and medical coding specialist graduate from the Pipestone campus and **Tricia Scholtes**, a radiologic technology graduation from the Luverne site, gave the student address.

The Worthington Campus graduated three hundred and fourteen students in twenty-five different program areas. The commencement speaker was **Dr. Manuel Lopez**, Associate Vice Chancellor for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.



Campus Updates

Canby

Each year the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities' Board of Trustees recognizes a faculty member with its highest academic honor; the *Award for Excellence in Teaching*. This honor acknowledges and rewards exceptional professional accomplishments and encourages ongoing excellence in teaching. The Board of Trustees chooses from a small pool of nominees, brought forth by each member institution. The Minnesota West nominee for the 2009 Award for Excellence in Teaching is **Jim Brewers**, Electrical Instructor on the Canby Campus. Throughout his 23 plus years on the Canby Campus, he has no doubt left a lasting impression on many of his students. And likewise, there have been numerous students that left an impression on him. Jim has been the SkillsUSA advisor for the last 12 years and thoroughly enjoys watching the students compete at the state and national levels. In fact, he attributes some of his most memorable moments to the SkillsUSA National Competition in Kansas City.



Jim Brewers - Electrical Instructor



Bill Manor

Granite Falls

Bill Manor, Instructor in the Robotics and Fluid Power Technology departments at the Granite Falls Campus is retiring after more than 31 years of service to Minnesota West. Bill is well known on the campus for his dedication to students and his commitment to providing the best possible hands-on education to the students to prepare them for the workforce. Bill's time at Minnesota West will continue on a part-time basis for the 2009-2010 academic year.

John Joosten is retiring after over twenty years of service to Minnesota West. Joosten, currently the Assistant Dean of Career and Technical Education has served as campus administrator for both the Granite Falls and Canby Campuses, a dean of students, a director of special needs and as an assistant coordinator during this time at Minnesota West. Joosten is an alumnus of the Worthington Campus.



John Joosten

Ron Arneson, Instructor in the Machine Tool Technology program at the Granite Falls Campus received an award at the Graduation Ceremony on May 13th for 30 Years of Service to Minnesota West Community & Technical College. Ron's favorite part of his years with the college has been "working with students and watching them succeed".

Jackson

Six Jackson campus students as well as seven students linked by ITV from the Granite Falls campus had the opportunity to build new computers from the ground up as part of their PC maintenance and repair program. The student initially had to discuss what the finished product would look like, and then begin building the computers through ordering and assembling the computers as a group. **Micha Hooper**, PC program student, said "Early on we looked at parts and decided as a group what kind of computer we wanted to build. We needed to know what we wanted to do." When the parts came in, the class worked together to build the first computer, then they built computers individually. **Terri Pelzel**, Minnesota West computer instructor, said "The RAM is four times that of a normal machine and the speed is incredible." Hooper said of the project, "More than anything, its fun, you get the inner working of the computer. You get your hands dirty so to speak. Its fun seeing something work so well that you built." The completed computers cost \$493 per computer, without any educational or other discounts.



Students in Terri Pelzel's PC maintenance and repair class work on a computer.



Ron Arneson

Pipestone

Pipestone Campus Student Senate sponsored an unusual drive on behalf of the Flandreau Indian School located in neighboring Flandreau, SD. More than 60 dresses were donated and given renewed life during the drive. **Betty Belkham**, Superintendent of the Flandreau Indian School, mentioned that prom dresses had been donated to the school in the past but the collection was becoming depleted with normal wear. Student Senate President **Debbie**

Handberg said she wanted to collect as many dresses as possible to give the girls at the school options. "There is quite a variety," she said. "I don't think there are any two dresses alike, so that's a good thing." Minnesota West cosmetology students also came to the aid of the students and provided formal up-does to 26 of the students. "The girls at the school are very appreciative of the dresses because we know they are next to new," Belkham said, "Our girls look beautiful at prom time."

Worthington



Anne Aby

Anne Aby has taught at Minnesota West in the History/Political Science department for 32 years. Anne has been active in several seminars, training programs, and professional organizations. She has served her community, school, and state on numerous boards and committees. In addition, she edited *The North Star State: A Minnesota Reader*, and has contributed to several publications, including *Open to Change: Strategies in Thinking, Writing and Classroom Assessment*, *Diversity Digest*, and *The World Book Encyclopedia*. Anne noted, "Minnesota West has great students, faculty, staff and administration. I have thoroughly enjoyed my many years of teaching here."



Pipestone cosmetology students provide "up-does" for Flandreau Indian School students.



Rolf Mahlberg

Rolf Mahlberg has taught at Minnesota West in the Agriculture and Farm Management departments and served as PAS advisor for 29 years. Rolf has been instrumental in developing the Bio-tech program, developing the first online Dairy Technician course in the nation that is offered bilingually in English and Spanish, and authoring and developing an online mentoring project for the college. In 2008, Rolf was selected to be the Minnesota West representative for the MnSCU Board of Trustees Award for Excellence in Teaching. When Rolf was asked about his years at Minnesota West he said, "I loved my subject (agriculture) but I loved my subjects (students) more."

Luverne

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System recognized the Luverne Educational Center for Health Careers for innovating partnerships at a ceremony on May 28th in Eden Prairie. The award is for the partnership between Minnesota West, the City of Luverne and Sanford Regional Health Systems for turning a vacant healthcare facility into the center which houses Minnesota West's radiologic technology, surgical technology, medical laboratory technician, phlebotomy and medial assistant programs as well as liberal arts classes for students in the area.



Luverne Center

Fairmont

The Minnesota West - Fairmont Center has been buzzing with activity this year. Thanks to an active group of students and staff, the Fairmont Center has hosted various events and activities during the 2008-2009 school year. Events such as bowling, Karaoke Night, Fall Harvest Party, Stress Break Luncheon, and Game Night were amongst the activities planned by the student group. It is that same group of active students and staff that has received the Picture-It-Painted Grant from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) and Valspar Corporation to paint the student commons space at the Fairmont Center.

Redwood Falls

Minnesota West Community and Technical College is excited to announce the opening of the Redwood Falls Learning Center in the fall of 2009. Classes will be available through ITV and on-line. Contact the Redwood Falls Center at (507) 637-6007 for more information.

Minnesota West Foundation Board of Directors *New officers elected*



Gary Hoffmann
Chair



Sherry Benton
Vice Chair



Amy McCoy
Secretary



Marjean Ossefoort
Treasurer



Diana Anderson
Past Chair

The Minnesota West Foundation Board of Directors elected officers at their meeting in May. The board re-elected **Gary Hoffmann** of Worthington as Chair, **Sherry Benton** of Worthington as Vice-Chair, **Amy McCoy** (Alumna) of Tracy as Secretary and **Marjean Ossefoort** (Alumna) of Pipestone as Treasurer. The board also recognized outgoing board member **Diana Anderson** of Hutchinson for all her work and support of the Minnesota West Foundation over the years. Thank You Diana!

Board elects a permanent student position on board of directors

The Minnesota West Foundation Board of Directors elected to hold one position on the twelve member board for a student from one of the campuses of Minnesota West Community and Technical College. The board wanted to create a mechanism to have student input in the fiscal direction of the foundation. The student position will change every year and will be held by a second year student. In 2009 and 2010, the student who was nominated and elected to the Board of Directors is **Allison Rotert**, a student from the Worthington Campus. Rotert plays volleyball for the Lady BlueJays, serves on the student senate and is a student ambassador. She is a graduate of Worthington High School.



Allison Rotert

Scholarships in 2008-2009 School Year

The Minnesota West Foundation awarded over \$114,000 in scholarships to students on the five campuses of Minnesota West Community and Technical College. Foundation director, **Jim Smalley**, said that the total number of scholarships and the total number of dollars given out by the foundation to students has increase each year for the past several years. He also stated that it is the goal of both the college and the foundation to continue to increase the number of scholarships and the amount given to help students pursue their education.

2009 Graduate Spotlight

Reyad Saada – Worthington



Reyad Saada

Reyad has worked in the LARC on the Worthington Campus as an interpreter in the Worthington community because he speaks four languages; English, Amharic, Oromo and Swahili.

Reyad Saada graduated with his associate of science in Human Services Generalist Track in May from the Worthington Campus of Minnesota West. Reyad is not a typical Minnesota West graduate however, while he did come to Minnesota West after graduating from Sioux Falls Washington High School, he came to the United States in 2004 at the age of 19. Reyad did not know any English, and he did not understand any of the American customs.

Reyad and his family moved to the United States after spending time in a refugee camp in Kenya, Africa after the family fled their home country of Ethiopia, Africa. Reyad lived in the refugee camp with his younger siblings for two years, while his parents lived in Sioux Falls, SD, trying to earn enough money to bring the family to the capital city.

After he and his two siblings moved to the United States, and graduated from high school in 2007 and found his way to Minnesota West after friends told him about the school. When Reyad visited the Worthington Campus he was impressed by how friendly the staff was, and how everyone seemed to be interested in helping Reyad become successful.

Reyad's plans include finishing his associate of arts degree over the summer at Minnesota West and transferring to Minnesota State University-Mankato to major in social work. Reyad said he wants to become a social worker because he received so much help and support from the nongovernmental organization (NGO) staff in the refugee camp and social workers after he arrived in this country that he wants to give back to others. The concept of giving back does not apply to just Reyad in his family, as his younger brother is a second year law enforcement student at Minnesota West.

Besides his school work, Reyad has worked in the LARC on the Worthington Campus and worked as an interpreter in the Worthington community because he speaks four languages, English, Amharic, Oromo and Swahili.

Reyad has strong feelings for Minnesota West because of the faculty and staff at the college. "They all want you to be somewhere," he says, and that they want you to learn so they are always available to help you. He said the faculty and staff were very helpful to him because they would listen to what he needed and helped him get what he needed to succeed.

Why Do People Give to the Minnesota West Foundation?



Joel Kunze

Joel Kunze – 1980 Alumnus of the Worthington Campus

Joel Kunze graduated from Worthington High School in 1978 and attended the Worthington Campus of Minnesota West graduating with his Associate of Arts degree in 1980. He attended Minnesota West because it provided an opportunity to work and save money for college as well as being able to transfer his credits to the University of Minnesota to finish his bachelor's degree.

From there Joel received his bachelor's degree in economics (cum laude) from the University of Minnesota in 1982 and his master's degree in agricultural and applied economics from the University of Minnesota in 1984. Joel has worked for Upper Iowa University in Fayette, Iowa for twenty years, first as a history professor and now as the Director of Web Services / Maltbie Assistant Professor of History. Kunze says he gives to Minnesota West because, "being employed in higher education, I know firsthand the importance of donations, no matter how small, in enabling a college to carry out its mission to provide a quality educational experience for its students. I began donating to Minnesota West simply to give back to an institution that benefited me."

Notes&News

Minnesota West Community and Technical College is pleased to announce that the **Medical Laboratory Technician Program (MLT) is awarded Continuing Accreditation** for seven years by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences. The Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) program at Minnesota West is designed to prepare students for employment in the medical, clinical, research and public health laboratories. A MLT collects and/or receives patient specimens and performs general laboratory tests to aid physicians in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. The MLT program is located at the Luverne, MN center. The National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) is the premier agency for accreditation and approval of educational programs in the clinical laboratory sciences and related healthcare disciplines.

Five Minnesota West Electrician students from the Canby Campus and their advisor, **Jim Brewers**, made their way to the 42nd Annual SkillsUSA. State Leadership & Skills Championship Conference held at the Sheraton South Hotel in Bloomington, MN. Student competitors from the Canby Campus included **Jarad Ortmann** of Marshall, MN who receive honorable mention in the residential wiring competition; **Jeremy Perry** of Madison, MN; **Jeffrey Weis** of Bemidji, MN; **Trevor Humphrey** of Tracy, MN who received third place honors in the motor controls competition; and **Geoff Ruppert** of Slayton, MN.

Minnesota West Community & Technical College would like to congratulate Post-Secondary Agriculture (PAS) students for being elected as state officers. **Jared Ahrens**, Fulda, MN was elected president of the state-wide PAS organization, and **Anthony Zins**, Fulda was also named as an officer.

Dawn Gordon, Director of Nursing at Minnesota West Community and Technical College is pleased to announce that the **Associate Degree Nursing Program has achieved Candidacy Status with the National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC)**. The National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission is nationally recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the accrediting agency for post-secondary and higher degree nursing programs. Accreditation is a voluntary, self-regulatory process by which non-governmental associations recognize educational institutions or programs that have been found to meet or exceed standards and criteria for educational quality. This is the first step toward complete NLN accreditation. A final decision will be made by NLNAC on complete accreditation in the summer of 2009. If granted accreditation by NLNAC, all future as well as this spring's graduates of Minnesota West's Associate Degree Nursing program will benefit. Minnesota West's nursing programs are approved by the Minnesota State Board of Nursing and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees.

The annual **Student Art Show** was on display through May 4 in the



Cast of "Snoopy! Snoopy!"

Fine Arts Building at Minnesota West, Worthington campus. Award recipients and prize amounts below:
1st Place – **Josh Von Holdt** - \$50;
2nd Place – **Ana Li Zhong** - \$30;
3rd Place – **Brock Bisailon** - \$20.
Purchase Awards: **Elly Schmitz** - \$40;
Serina Manwarren - \$25. Honorable Mention - \$5: **Amy Byer**; **Jody Tracy**; **Stephanie Tordsen**; **Melinda Osland**; **Bridget Wass**; **John Hubbard**; **Sue Shade**.

TracPipe, a flexible gas piping, was the topic of a workshop held on the Pipestone Campus of Minnesota West for the HVAC and plumbing students. The new technology of a flexible pipe works in conjunction with the black pipe system. Students were trained and certified in the techniques of using TracPipe during the workshop.

This spring Minnesota West students performed in the musical **"Snoopy!"** "Snoopy!" the sequel to *"You're a Good Man Charlie Brown,"* focusing on the life of the world's most famous



Bob Collins and student

beagle and contained more than 15 toe-tapping tunes performed by Charlie Brown and the gang, including director and Snoopy. The seven-member cast has been rehearsing since January and has also had to learn how to create make-believe. "I think make-believe is a lot more difficult than drama or comedy because you have to be big enough to make the make-believe real," Music

Director **Eric Parrish** said. The cast said they've had fun entering into the musical, cartoon world of Snoopy and friends.

Bob Collins from Minnesota Public Radio featured Minnesota West Worthington campus students in his blog "News Cut" featured on the Minnesota Public Radio website. Collins spoke to students about

their journey and economic views. Students from various backgrounds had the opportunity to meet with Collins. Collins interviewed students to get their view and outlook on issues including the current economy. The conversations are used to inform others or be a part of Minnesota Public Radio News coverage. Collins also visited classrooms to share his communications experience.

Alumni Updates

1970s

Bruce Huebner – 1973, Auto Mechanics, Canby – Bruce is living in Ethan, South Dakota.

Christine (Hagemann) Weber – 1979, Government Accounting, Granite Falls – Chris lives with her spouse, Louie, in Rogers, Minnesota. Chris is the office manager at Tartan Marketing. They have three children and five grandchildren.

1980s

Thomas Ackerman – 1984, AA, Worthington and 1976, Accounting, Granite Falls – Thomas is living in Olathe, Kansas and is financial software consultant and owner of Ackerman Business Consulting II which is founded 2006. Thomas has four children and five grandchildren.

Dan Schmitt – 1984, Fluid Power, Granite Falls – Dan lives in Farmington, Minnesota with his wife Sherry and their three children. Dan has been working with the John Henry Foster Company for twenty-three years and is a senior service technician in the air compressor service department. Dan is proud to say that his son, Adam, will be attending the Granite Falls campus for fluid power in the fall of 2010.

Kyle Wallsmith – 1988, Robotics, Granite Falls – Kyle is living in Princeton, Minnesota and working at Midwest Overhead Crane.

1990s

Michele (Wasmund) Schroeder – 1990, Corrections, Worthington – Michele is living in Lake Crystal, Minnesota and works at the Blue Earth County Community Corrections.

Connie (Johnson) Drabant – 1991, Accounting, Granite Falls – Connie is living in Crystal, Minnesota with her husband of twelve years and their three children, ages 18, 8 and 3. Connie worked at Carlson Companies and TCF Equipment Finance before staying at home with their youngest child.

Michelle (Sanders) Burns – 1993, Bookkeeping, Jackson – Michelle is living in Owatonna, Minnesota.

Lisa (Sieve) Springer – 1998, Nursing, Worthington – Lisa and her husband Roy were married in August, 2008 and now live in Alexandria, Minnesota with Lisa's son, Layne. Lisa was employed as an RN in Eden Prairie before moving to Alexandria and Roy works for Minnesota Electric in Alexandria.

Joseph Alcorn – 1998, Accounting, Granite Falls – Joseph is living in Walnut Grove, Minnesota and is retired.

Josh McCarron – 1999, Electric Utility, Jackson – Josh is living in Griffith, Indiana with his significant other, Christie, and their three children. Josh is a senior power systems engineer for Electric Power Systems.

2000s

Adam Pigott – 2002, Agriculture, Worthington – Adam is living in Cherokee, Iowa with his wife, Michelle, and their three daughters. Adam is the district sales manager for NC Plus Hybrids.

Kara (Kruckman) Carter – 2004, Administrative Assistant, Granite Falls – Kara is living in Cibolo, Texas, outside of San Antonio, with her husband, Aaron, who is soon retiring from the United States Army after twenty years of service. Kara and Aaron have three children, and Kara stays at home with the children.

Amber (Foty) Schueler – 2004, AA, Worthington – Amber is living in Fairmont, Minnesota and working at GNC.

Jennifer (Reynolds) Hagedorn – 2004, Nursing, Worthington – Jennifer is living in Tracy, Minnesota and works for Sanford Tracy Medical Center.

Lloyd James – 2005, Carpentry, Pipestone – Lloyd is living in Yankton, South Dakota and working for Isanti Construction Services.

Perian (Goranson) Kummrow – 2006, Admin/Accounting Clerk, Jackson – and **Henry Kummrow** – 2003, computer science – Perian and Henry are living in Johnston, Iowa. Perian is an administrative assistant/accounting clerk for TEAM Services, while Henry is working for Verista Service.

Kristie Clark – 2006, Liberal Arts, Worthington – Kristie is living in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Sharon Murphy – 2006, Nursing, Worthington – Sharon is living in Lake Park, Iowa and working for Lakes Regional Health Care.

Rachel (Mumm) Golden – 2006, Administrative Assistant, Granite Falls – Rachel is living in Milan, Minnesota.

Michelle (Van Hul) Lowe – 2006, AA, Worthington – Michelle is living in Sibley, Iowa and working at the Osceola County Sheriff's Office.

Megan (Bradley) Jones – 2007, Nursing, Worthington – Megan is living in St. James, Minnesota and working at the St. James Medical Center.

Join Something Special Today

Last month, Minnesota West Community and Technical College sent more than 700 new college graduates into our communities. Some will continue their education; most others will begin working in our communities, with our employers. The importance of providing an educated workforce is always something special, but in our current economic times, when many people and businesses are struggling, the commitment of Minnesota West to provide excellence in education is more important than ever. You can join this success story by supporting the Minnesota West Foundation through your tax-deductable gift today!

Don't forget the Minnesota West Foundation in your will or trust – your support can help all students at Minnesota West!

Your donation can be sent to the Minnesota West Foundation, 1011 1st St. W, Canby, MN 56220.

Pipestone Class Reunion

Students from the 2003, 2004 and 2005 classes from the Pipestone Campus are invited to a reunion on October 10th at Keylargo Bar and Grill on Lake Shetek near Slayton. Please contact **Lisa Sanchez** at lsanche215@hotmail.com.

Alumni Art Exhibition

The Minnesota West Community & Technical College Art Gallery will be hosting an Alumni Art Exhibition in April, 2010. If you are an alumni and are interested, contact **Bobbie Alsgaard-Lien** at 507-372-3492 or bobbie.alsgaard@mnwest.edu.



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