

NEWS RELEASE

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603 West Park Street, Sheldon, Iowa 51201
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Northwest Iowa Community College and Mill Creek Machining Partner in Innovative Apprenticeship Program

On Friday, February 12, representatives from Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC); Mill Creek Machining, Paulina; and Senator Joni Ernst's office came together to sign a partnership agreement between NCC and Mill Creek Machining for an innovative Apprenticeship Program. The goal of the program is to train Mill Creek's labor force, so their employees can have the opportunity to achieve Machinist Journeyman status while continuing to work full time.

A Machinist Journeyman is part of the Engineering and Manufacturing Industry. This apprenticeship develops a fully qualified journeyman level Machinist who has the ability to reach different competency benchmarks for a broader knowledge of the industry, climbing the career ladder, and increasing their income potential.

Some of the benefits for employers to participate in Apprenticeship Programs is they will have a baseline of education for their employees. This leads to the company being more efficient and productive. It also creates a progressive work environment in which their employees can flourish and know they are valued. The Apprenticeship Program allows the employee to have a full time job and at the same time gain machining knowledge and skills as they go through the program. The apprenticeship is a mixture of both classroom and hands-on training. The classroom learning is all online and can be taken at their convenience. Each employee is also assigned a mentor within their organization. They will always have a mentor to help them stay on track and answer any questions that may arise.

One unique aspect of NCC's Apprenticeship Program is that it is a competency based approach to learning. Most apprenticeships are based on a certain number of hours spent in the classroom and lab. This new and innovative approach is based on a student mastering a skill and then testing using both written and demonstrative methods before moving on to the next skill or competency. If they go into the program with a good understanding of the machining process they could complete the apprenticeship much faster than the traditional four years a normal apprenticeship takes.

When they are done with the program they will achieve Machinist Journeyman status. This is a nationally recognized status that the employee can take with them anywhere.

Justin Stamer, owner/manager of Mill Creek Machining, said, "I have always wanted to do something like this for my business and for my employees. We are always looking for good employees. This will hang the carrot out there for potential employees to come to Mill Creek. I am very happy to start this partnership with NCC."

"I am really happy to start the apprenticeship program," said Rich Buckley, Mill Creek Machining employee. "I am happy to provide for my family while at the same time bettering myself for the future. I have found out that I really like taking a piece of steel and making it into something useful. I love machining and am happy to further my knowledge and be more valuable to the company."

Austin Bainbridge, Mill Creek Machining employee, also commented, "I want to further my knowledge in machining and this is a great way to do it. Participating in this program helps me and ultimately the community I live in. Hopefully I can train others as I learn the trade myself."

Jerry Self, Regional Director for Senator Joni Ernst, said, "We need to establish strong manufacturing in the United States again. He went on to say, "Community colleges such as Northwest Iowa Community College are leaning forward and

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accepting the challenge to help attract and retain quality employees for these skilled jobs that in are demand right now.”

NCC President Alethea Stubbe wrapped things up by stating, “This is a different avenue of training for NCC, our first Department of Labor apprenticeship program, but definitely not the last. We are happy to help provide this new approach to education within our communities as we continue to develop new partnerships with area industry leaders.”

For more information about workforce training and/or starting an Apprenticeship Program contact Jason Anderson, NCC Director of Economic Development and Workforce Training at 712-324-5061, ext.194 or email him at:

janderson@nwicc.edu. At Northwest Iowa Community College – Your Success is Our Story. Proudly celebrating 50 years of service to our communities in 2016!

Pictured: (l-r) Alethea Stubbe, NCC President, Justin Stamer, Owner/manager of Mill Creek Machining, Jerry Self, Regional Director for Senator Joni Ernst, Rich Buckley, Mill Creek Machining employee, Austin Bainbridge, Mill Creek Machining employee