Inside this issue of *The Connection* magazine, you will find stories concerning Rosenboom’s donation of a collaborative robot to Northwest Iowa Community College; Diesel Technology alumni and how a partnership with Town & Country Implement has worked to provide both scholarship (sponsorship) and employment; and the Summer Youth Internship Pilot Program (SYIPP) that offered paid internships to area youth for career exploration in the field of manufacturing.

Another piece of news has to do with the fact that Northwest Iowa Community College has a new administrative team, including a new president—me. It is an honor to introduce myself to the readership of *The Connection* magazine. My name is John Hartog, and although I am new to this position, I am not new to the College nor to Northwest Iowa. I had been serving as NCC’s Vice President for Student and Academic Services since 2011. Before this, for as long as I can remember, I have been coming to Northwest Iowa during the holidays to spend time with my grandmother, aunts, uncles, and cousins on my father’s side.

To be chosen as the next president of this great institution is an honor, and I am truly humbled by it. Because of my background, I envision my new position as being more of a “shepherd” than a “president.” As some of you may know, I started my career path as an ordained minister. Years later, here at NCC, I am still guiding, teaching, and caring for people at the College and in our communities.

The College is on the right path, and we need to keep moving forward. I am happy, humbled, and grateful to announce that WalletHub.com recently ranked NCC as #2 in the nation for “Best Career Outcomes” and #9 in the nation for “Overall Best Community College.” You will hear more about these honors in the weeks ahead, but for now I think it is fitting to highlight the smart planning and hard work of our board of trustees and employees. They are the ones who earned this recognition and deserve our congratulations and gratitude for their hard work.

Recognitions like these confirm that we are already on the right path and prove that NCC is a remarkable college. We want to accomplish even more for our students and communities. I believe there are many exciting things in store for NCC; so every day I work enthusiastically with a professional team to achieve greater success.

Our objective is to build our College and our region by building its people. We will enhance campus life, create new learning opportunities for our students, and offer new workforce solutions for our industry partners. NCC has long contributed to the strength and vitality of Northwest Iowa by providing quality, affordable, and accessible education.

We aspire to do more of the same and encourage you to be full partners in this endeavor. We are firm believers in NCC’s core values of service and success, and we always welcome more partners who share these beliefs. I look forward to having you stand with us in the years to come as active citizens of Thunder Nation.

Together we will accomplish more. We will capitalize on our historic strengths as we launch into our bright future. NCC employees, alumni, industry partners, and community members will combine expertise, efforts, and resources so that we can say with confidence,

“The best is yet to come!”

John Hartog III, PhD
President
what’s inside...

THIS ISSUE

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A week filled with activities and celebrations highlighted a busy fall on campus!

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ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR
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Get to know some of the new faces on campus!

about the cover
NCC’s Radiologic Technology graduates from the Summer 2021 class earned a 100% pass rate on their first attempt at passing the American Registry of Radiologic Technology (A.R.R.T.) boards allowing them to practice as a licensed Radiologic Technologist in general radiology. This is the second year in a row the graduating Rad Tech class achieved this accomplishment. Congratulations!
It is an exciting time at Northwest Iowa Community College! The celebration of the grand opening and ribbon-cutting of NCC’s Diesel Technology and Automotive classrooms and labs, and the Educational Partnership with Snap-on Tools, Inc. took place during the NCC Days of Thunder week.

The celebration included remarks from NCC representatives, the Sheldon Chamber of Commerce, City of Sheldon, as well as leadership from Snap-on Tools Inc. NHRA driver Cruz Pedregon’s Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger Nitro Car was also on campus during the celebration. Several area legislators or their representatives also spoke at the event including: Jacob Bossman, representing Senator Chuck Grassley; Kolby DeWitt, representing Senator Joni Ernst; Wes Fopma, representing Congressman Randy Feenstra; Senator Jeff Taylor; Representative John Willis; Representative Skyler Wheeler; and Representative Dennis Bush. Included during the celebration was the presentation of NCC’s Outstanding 2020–2021 Alumnus of the Year award to Andy Jacobs, Diesel Technology (‘02). (See Alumni story on page 17.).

There were many accolades and positivity for the future of NCC and the community during the speeches, but perhaps the most energizing segment was when a loud cheer erupted from the students in the crowd when Steve Waldstein, Dean of Applied Technology, introduced the instructors of the Diesel Technology and Automotive & Light Duty Diesel programs along with Karri Spanjer, Parts/Service Store Associate. Senator Jeff Taylor, who worked and taught in higher education for most of his career and was an instructor at a community and technical college in Rochester, MN for 10 years, later said, “As a past instructor myself, I am happy to hear the enthusiasm from the students for their instructors. That doesn’t always happen and it is wonderful and a great testament to the fine job the instructors are doing here.”

Finally, Dr. John Hartog thanked NCC President Emeritus Dr. Alethea Stubbe for all the work she did to lead the College through the General Obligation Bond Referendum process and the planning and actual construction/remodel of Building D. Dr. Hartog said, “This strategic initiative will serve our community and increase the number of skilled workers in Northwest Iowa for many years to come. It is an exciting time to celebrate the remodel and expansion of this 50 year-old structure and the unique partnership between NCC, SnapOn Tools, and the community that is beneficial for the region and all of Iowa!”
The project was made possible by the voters in the counties of Lyon, O’Brien, Osceola, Sioux, and in the Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn School District located in Cherokee County (Area IV) who voted in 2018 to approve a 14.1-million-dollar referendum for Northwest Iowa Community College. The referendum passed at nearly 74% and ensured NCC’s ability to continue offering high-quality, accessible, and affordable education to our communities. This construction is a direct result of the passage of the referendum.

Hitting Milestones and Changing Leadership

Northwest Iowa Community College also hosted a Sheldon Chamber of Commerce Coffee to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the opening of the Lifelong Learning & Recreation Center (LLRC) and to welcome NCC’s 10th President, Dr. John Hartog III on Thursday, September 23. The coffee was open to the public, and community members were encouraged to attend.

The LLRC officially opened its doors to the community on June 15, 2011. This facility was built through the innovative and collaborative efforts between Northwest Iowa Community College, Sanford Sheldon, and the City of Sheldon who worked together to construct a facility that would meet the wellness needs of residents of Northwest Iowa.

Over the years, the LLRC has been the center of wellness activities not only for the College, offering wellness solutions to its employees and students, but also to the community through group fitness classes, personal training, and events like Live Healthy Northwest Iowa. The LLRC has also offered a great space for the College to host graduations, orientations, and events for students like Days of Thunder. The community uses the LLRC as a space to gather and hold city recreation leagues, non-profit fundraisers like the annual SCAT supper and the Kiwanis youth basketball tournament, and to host community events like the recent O’Brien County Relay for Life.

NCC also celebrated Dr. John Hartog and his transition to the role of President. (Read more about Dr. Hartog on page 10.)
Ryan's busy getting his customers

ON THE ROAD AGAIN
For Ryan Ver Mulm, Mike’s Service Garage in Sioux Center is like a second home. The Ver Mulm family has been involved in the Automotive Industry for decades. In fact, Ryan’s parents, Roger and Jill, bought Mike’s Service Garage just before he was born. One could say that becoming an Automotive Mechanic was Ryan’s birthright.

Ryan grew up in a shop environment. For as long as he can remember, he recalls watching and assisting his dad work on various cars and trucks. Ryan graduated from Sioux Center High School in 2010. He graduated early and began working for Roger at their family business, Mike’s Service Garage. Roger was a self-taught mechanic. He never attended formal training, but wanted Ryan to have a different experience. Although Ryan had a lot of on the job training, his goal was to pursue a degree in the Automotive Service Technology program at Northwest Iowa Community College.

Enrolling in NCC’s automotive program was a no-brainer! The Automotive program had a great reputation; NCC was close to home; enrolling there allowed him to continue working in the family business, and allowed him to save money, both by living at home and through the affordable tuition rates. Ryan began the program in the fall of 2010.

Ryan thoroughly enjoyed the program and had a great experience at NCC. One huge benefit for NCC automotive students is the opportunity to work on real vehicles. The vehicles they perform work on have real owners and issues, unlike other programs that work only on trainers or mock-ups. Ryan appreciated the variety of hands-on experiences throughout his time in the program. He credits his instructors and automotive courses for giving him the extra knowledge and experiences he needed to be successful in the field.

At the time Ryan went through the program, Automotive Service Technology students had an option to pursue one additional year of education to obtain a degree in Diesel Technology. Watching his dad work on trucks for many years actually reinforced Ryan’s disinterest in it. The heavy and dirty work did not appeal to Ryan. He is thankful that his dad and other mechanics have the desire to work on trucks and heavy machinery as his passion is cars.

Ryan graduated from the Automotive Service Technology program in July of 2012 and began working full-time as an Auto Mechanic Specialist at Mike’s Service Garage. Mike’s Service Garage offers a comprehensive list of services and their specialists are skilled in a variety of areas. A typical day for Ryan includes a variety of tasks ranging from preparing estimates, completing invoices, scheduling jobs, performing oil changes, brakes & chassis work, light services, transmission work and more. Oftentimes, Ryan is found working on a larger project, such as an engine or transmission replacement. All of the Auto Mechanic Specialists at Mike’s Service Garage are cross-trained in a variety of skills. This allows them to work on a wide range of projects and provides a diverse schedule for each.

Although it keeps him busy, working full-time as an Auto Mechanic Specialist doesn’t give Ryan his fill for working on cars. He spends many evenings and weekends in the shop fixing up vehicles. Ryan considers this his hobby. He loves to buy vehicles that have potential, fix them up and get them back on the road again.

Ryan said, “My favorite part about being an auto mechanic specialist is taking a vehicle that drives horribly, fixing it and taking it out for that first, smooth test drive. I also find it very fulfilling to assist customers that are passing through the area and getting them back on the road. Oftentimes our schedules are full, but a customer will come in with an issue that needs immediate attention. It is gratifying to help people in these situations and know how much they appreciate the job you did.”

An automotive shop is clearly where Ryan is destined to be and he hopes to stay immersed in the automotive industry for years to come. He loves being an auto mechanic specialist at Mike’s Service Garage, and credits his family history in the industry and his NCC Automotive Instructors for helping him get to where he is today. Ryan shared, “The services that NCC provided to me gave me the knowledge and skills I needed to be successful in the automotive industry, and I hope to use skills to provide the best service to my customers for years to come. Ryan’s success is our story!”
Nicholas Abbas and Caleb Meyer came from different backgrounds and took different paths to NCC, but they are currently reaping the benefits of the same sponsorship opportunity.

Northwest Iowa Community College has been in the business of training diesel technicians since 1968. Graduates of the Diesel Technology program are prepared to enter a variety of positions at truck dealerships, truck fleets, owner/operators, construction contractors, farm equipment dealers, heavy equipment dealerships and independent repair shops. An expansion of classroom and lab space in 2020 increased the program capacity allowing NCC to train additional students, and in turn, produce additional technicians to meet high industry demand.

The diesel industry has faced a technician shortage for a number of years. In an effort to combat this, many companies offer sponsorship opportunities. Sponsorships encourage high school students to pursue careers in high-demand fields through offering benefits such as, tuition reimbursements, tool allowances, and guaranteed employment. Due to the wide variety of available jobs for diesel technicians, demand continues to increase at a rapid rate.

A large number of available sponsorship opportunities allow students to apply as early as their junior year of high school. Students who know what career field they wish to enter upon graduation have an advantage when it comes to sponsorships. Nicholas Abbas and Caleb Meyer are two examples of this.

Not knowing one another prior to beginning the Diesel Technology program at NCC, these two aspiring Diesel Technicians had a lot in common:

• Both knew they were attending the Diesel Technology Program at NCC.
• Both knew they would graduate from NCC with little-to-no debt thanks to Town & Country Implement’s Technician Scholarship Program.
• Both knew they would be employed as Ag Technicians at Town & Country Implement during their time at NCC and following graduation.

Nicholas and Caleb met during the fall semester of 2019 and learned they had something in common — both of them were recipients of the Town & Country Technician Scholarship program. The program provided each of them $5,000 towards tool expenses and $15,000 towards tuition reimbursement. It also guaranteed them part-time employment during school and full-time employment following graduation.

Upon graduation from the Diesel Technology program in July of 2021, Nicholas and Caleb began full-time positions as Ag Service Technicians at Town & Country Implement.

Mike Jansen, Service Manager at Town & Country Implement and alumnus of NCC’s Diesel Technology program, serves as Nicholas and Caleb’s supervisor. He appreciates the quality education that aspiring Diesel Technicians receive at NCC. Mike said, “Town and Country Implement as a whole looks forward to working with NCC every year. From working with the diesel instructors on projects for the students, to supplying resources to help students be successful. The Town and Country Implement Technician Scholarship Program not only helps get students into the Diesel program and covers a large portion of the expense, but also helps us as a dealership gain technicians. Being a NCC Alumnus myself, I find this to be a very helpful asset to students pursuing their degree in the program. We are very excited to have Nicholas and Caleb on board with us.

The NCC Diesel program does a great job with hands on experience, teaching organization while working on a project, expectations of a diesel shop and utilizing resources.

From start to finish of the diesel program, you can see the change in the student’s capabilities and that’s an important aspect in my book.”

Both Nicholas and Caleb hold a degree from NCC, have very little or no college debt and have a well-paid position at Town & Country Implement. These Diesel Alumni are a great example that it pays to take advantage of the sponsorship opportunities available in the Diesel Industry.

Nicholas and Caleb’s success is our story!
Hawarden, IA  
Sioux Center High School, Class of 2019  

NCC’s Diesel Technology program had a great reputation and I have always enjoyed hands-on work.

When I finish a job and everything is working properly. I also enjoy the variety of jobs we are exposed to at Town & Country Implement.

My main goal is to gain more experience with loaders and tractors.

Going through the Diesel Technology program at NCC helped to make me an asset and a great addition to the team of technicians at Town & Country Implement.

Why did you choose to attend NCC’s Diesel Technology program?  

What is your favorite part about your job?  

Where do you see yourself in 5–10 years?  

At NCC, your success is our story. How do you feel NCC has helped you to be successful?

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Doon, IA  
Trinity Christian Reformed High School, Class of 2019  

NCC was close to home, which allowed me to save money by living at home. During high school, I worked on my uncle’s farm on combines and doing various service jobs, and I loved it.

I enjoy working on larger machinery. My favorite feeling is when I start the machine and there are no “squeaks” or “bumps” after fixing it.

I hope to gain more knowledge and experience, and my goal is to be the “go to guy” for other technicians that have questions or need guidance on jobs.

I struggled with electronics and electrical systems, and going through Ken Kramer’s Heavy Duty Electrical Systems course helped me to understand and really grasp the electronic side of being a technician. All of the courses I took made me a better, and more well-rounded technician.
In a unanimous decision the Northwest Iowa Community College Board of Trustees approved the hiring of Dr. John Hartog III of Boyden, Iowa as the 10th president of NCC. The decision was announced during the Board’s regularly scheduled meeting Monday, February 22, 2021. Dr. Hartog officially began his duties on July 1, 2021. Hartog succeeds Dr. Alethea Stubbe who retired June 30, 2021.

Dr. Hartog served as the NCC Vice President for Student & Academic Services, a position he held since 2011. Prior to that, he had served as President of Faith Baptist College and Seminary, Ankeny. Over the course of his 18 years at Faith Baptist, he held a variety of other administrative roles including that of a Program Director, the Dean of the Seminary, the Academic Vice President, and the Provost.

Dr. Hartog holds a master’s degree from the University of Minnesota in Classical and Near Eastern Studies and a PhD from Central Seminary in Systematic Theology. He has completed the coursework for a PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University. He has three additional masters’ degrees and a number of academic and professional recognitions.
What are your short-term goals (1 year)?
One of my short-term goals is to develop the new leadership team, and this includes developing the new president—me! With the retirement of some key members of NCC’s leadership team, there is work to be done as people learn and understand their new roles. I know we hired a great team of people, and this will be a fun and an exciting time as we get to know each other better. Another goal relates to our website. A little over a year ago we partnered with a web agency to complete a full audit of NCC’s website. That audit suggested certain tasks that could be implemented to improve the site for both a better user experience and for enhanced marketing purposes. We have completed phase one of that project, and I am eager to venture into phase two. Finally, I am looking forward to the building-related celebrations: (1) the grand opening and ribbon cutting celebration of the Building D expansion and renovation, (2) the completion of the Building H addition by December 2022.

What are your long-term goals (5 years)?
This is an exciting question because the future for NCC is limitless! I will narrow down the answer through our strategic plan: We will increase our programmatic offerings by adding at least one more healthcare field of study and grow our nursing enrollments. We will transform our existing manufacturing curricula by adding some key components of the “Industry 4.0” agenda, and we hope to do this in both for-credit and non-credit ways. We will offer non-credit training in areas of industrial maintenance. Also, we will re-align and expand our student scholarships and sponsorships. We will build a fifth on-campus residence hall. Lastly, but certainly not least, an exciting addition in the next five years will be the debut of intercollegiate men’s and women’s soccer at NCC.

You have been here 10 years. Tell me one thing people would be surprised to know about you.
My life is pretty much an open book. People know that nine days out of ten I wear the same brand of shirt (Columbia), that I enjoy spending time in the countries of the Mediterranean and Middle East, and that my favorite meal is shawarma eaten in a busy bazaar or souk. Most surprising? I try to disc golf several times a week; I mow our lawn with a powered, push mower and shovel our snow with a shovel—yes, even in northwest Iowa; sometimes I add a pinch of cardamom to my coffee; as a young man, I served for three years as the English-speaking pastor of a Korean church; along with 20% of the U.S. population, I have double-jointed elbows.

What are you most excited about?
I enjoy working with people—all kinds of people. Developing individuals and then bringing them together into high-performing teams excites me. Currently, NCC’s staff includes 137 full-time and regular part-time employees. Over the past 18 months (as of August 23, 2021), NCC has on-boarded new employees and has transitioned a number of existing employees into a new role at the College. In fact, 48 of our non-adjunct employees, are new to NCC or are in a new position—over 30%! Every day we are developing people, and we are doing it intentionally and with good results. New people bring new perspectives and new solutions. Employees who have been at NCC for a while preserve our heritage and institutional memory. It’s a great dynamic when new and long-standing employees work together creatively and productively. I’m thrilled to be a part of this dynamic.

What are some things NCC does well?
I think NCC does a lot of things very well. Our core values of service and success are something I believe all employees hold close to their heart when making any decision. NCC’s employees are mission driven. We strive to offer affordable open access for all. We endeavor to provide the best quality education that can be found anywhere. Our programs provide employability — we impart skills for which people will be paid for the rest of their lives.

Where do you see some room for improvement?
As with any educational institution, there is always room for growth. Enrollment is one of the primary driving factors for NCC, and it affects every part of the College. We would like to come out of the pandemic with solid enrollments and in order to do that we must strengthen our position for future growth. It is a critical mission for NCC to provide qualified graduates to our area businesses who need qualified employees. We could also increase our external partnerships. I think we could expand those offerings by setting up new scholarships and student sponsorships, partnering on recruitment, or helping businesses with their soft-skill trainings. Finally, over the past year we have laid the groundwork for institutional-wide self-assessment with the goal of continuous self-improvement. I know that’s a mouthful, but it means we must always progress from great to greater. I know we are up to the task and great things lay ahead!

Why do you want to be NCC’s president?
I have always considered myself a shepherd at heart—whether that was exhibited early in my career by fulfilling the duties of an ordained minister, or now by fulfilling the duties of a college president helping people to reach personal goals. I see everything in my career path intricately connected, preparing me for this new position. While early in my career my shepherd’s heart manifested itself in my ministry, over the past 28 years it has exhibited itself in my various roles in higher education. I am optimistic that I will be able to harness my previous experiences in ways that will enhance my leadership readiness as I step into my new role at NCC. My hope is humbly to lead a group of dedicated people: to help NCC’s employees, students, and community become the best versions of themselves.

Why NCC? What was it that attracted you to NCC?
My predecessor, Dr. Alethea Stubbe, sometimes referred to NCC as “small but mighty,” and her description is absolutely true. All the great things NCC was accomplishing were obvious at the time I interviewed for the Vice President for Student & Academic Services position ten years ago. The energy displayed by the NCC personnel impressed me as did their views for what the future could look like. I definitely wanted to be a part of that positive energy. I also chose NCC for many of the same reasons our students do: its friendly atmosphere, its small(ish) size, its hands-on work emphasis, and its student-centered philosophy. I knew I could make a difference at NCC, and I wanted to be a part of the great team here. With all that being said, what attracted me most to NCC was the way that the College throws open its doors to everyone, and everyone includes me! NCC is an open-access institution. Dr. Stubbe offered me an opportunity to serve here ten years ago. More recently, the Board asked me to serve as president. I have felt at home at NCC from day one, and I will always be grateful to Dr. Stubbe, to the Board, and to College employees for these opportunities to serve and to feel at home. Now, I hope to make even more of a difference in my new role as the team leader.
Northwest Iowa Community College in partnership with the Northwest Iowa Manufacturers group offered a manufacturing internship opportunity to area young people (age 14–19 years old) this past summer. The grant was part of the Summer Youth Internship Pilot Program (SYIPP) administered through Iowa Workforce Development. This pilot project was designed to help meet Future Ready Iowa’s goal of having 70% of Iowa’s workforce complete education or training beyond high school by 2025.

Northwest Iowa Community College’s Transitions and Workforce & Economic Development Departments submitted the grant proposal that was intended to provide the opportunity for students to explore and build awareness of careers within the manufacturing industry and teach them about available educational opportunities. This program was also designed to help expand the number of minorities working in manufacturing in Northwest Iowa; and help fill the skills gap which exists in the manufacturing industry.

Over the summer, a total of 25 area students learned about opportunities available in manufacturing and manufacturing education in Northwest Iowa. All of the students were placed in one of 15 local manufacturing industry partners in 10 different communities within 5 counties. The internships ranged from welding, quality control, human resources, and accounting all under the umbrella of careers within the field of manufacturing.

The internship started with a week-long class on NCC’s campus in which the instructor taught soft skills and the students earned their OSHA Safety Certifications. Each student was then assigned a mentor at the industry partner they would be interning at. Each mentor was a specialist in the student’s chosen career exploration field. The student and the mentor met one another and then both participated in a mentor/mentee training one afternoon. The students then needed to complete 60 hours of work at the business and they were paid an hourly wage. Each week the workplace mentor evaluated the student’s work including safety, attitude, professionalism, and communication. The instructor for the internship also visited each student’s workplace during the duration of the internship. College credit was awarded after completion of the internship.

“We were happy to be able to provide this wonderful opportunity to our local students. We feel that offering young people more exposure to the manufacturing industry could lead to increase students’ financial upward mobility and more manufacturing jobs being filled in our area,” said Sarah Breems-Diekevers, Director of Student Development, Secondary Programs, and Transitions.
Student participants recognized the value of the internship. “The NCC Internship program has been both a fun and valuable opportunity for me. Through my time in the classroom and on the jobsite, I have been able to broaden my horizons and experience the business side of manufacturing,” said Kristina Goth from Marcus. “I was paired with Den Hartog Industries (DHI) in Hospers to work in their quality department. Through this experience, I was able to gain skills that will not only help me excel in college and in the workforce, but also in everyday life. I am grateful for NCC, Den Hartog Industries, and the many other organizations that have given me this opportunity to learn, have fun, and gain valuable work experience.”

For some students, the internship lead to job offers. “I worked in the welding department at DEMCO Manufacturing, Company. I had never welded before this internship, so I learned a lot through this experience. I had a really fun time. I was really excited that DEMCO Manufacturing offered me a job after my internship was over,” said Keon DenHoed from Boyden.

Besides learning how to weld, one of the big take-aways I had was the importance of networking. I have heard about networking before, but now I feel like I understand it.

A participating industry partner was Simply Said, Rock Rapids. Michelle Leuthold supervised the internship and felt really good about the internship program. “We hosted one intern this year. We had our intern rotate throughout the facility so she could experience what it was like to work at a manufacturing business by experiencing multiple careers. She participated in everything from working in the office to working on the floor. We felt really good about the internship program and thought it was well organized. We would be happy to participate in this program again.”

Manufacturing is Iowa’s largest industry, which is poised to add 19,000 jobs through 2025 according to the Education & Workforce Trends report from Iowa Workforce Development. Local employers are constantly fighting barriers of the consistently low unemployment rate ranging from 2.6–3.2%. The workers currently looking for jobs do not have skills that align with the openings available.
It is predicted that 3.5 million U.S. manufacturing jobs will need to be filled over the next decade. The current skills gap affects manufacturers’ ability to meet customer demand and implement new technology. It is estimated that this skills gap will cause 2 million manufacturing jobs to be vacant. Northwest Iowa Community College, the Northwest Iowa Manufacturing Sector and the Northwest Area Education Agency have come up with a solution for this skills gap in Northwest Iowa—the Northwest Iowa Best Welding Apprenticeship program.

The Registered Apprenticeship System provides opportunity for workers seeking high-skilled, high-paying jobs and employers seeking to build a qualified workforce. Registered Apprenticeships combine on-the-job learning with related classroom instruction. The key to a successful apprenticeship is developing a pathway that ensures the development of the skills necessary to be successful in a specific career field. This pathway involves both academic and career centered competencies. NCC, the Northwest Iowa Manufacturing Sector and the Northwest Area Education Agency have created a framework that students, schools and businesses will benefit from.

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?**

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The benefits for students who complete the Northwest Iowa Best Welding Apprenticeship are extensive. Upon successful completion of the program, students will have earned the following:

- High school diploma
- Registered Apprenticeship Certificate
- Certification from the American Welding Society
- College credit towards NCC’s Welding Diploma/Associate of Applied Science degree programs
- Cost of the college courses covered by concurrent enrollment
- A paid position while attending NCC
- A guaranteed job following graduation
- The option to transfer to a four-year college or university to complete a Bachelor’s degree

Students are eligible to begin the related technical instruction as early as their junior year of high school. Due to NCC’s concurrent enrollment offerings, students are not required to take extra courses or spend extra time in the classroom. Students complete related technical instruction at NCC in the morning and high school graduation requirements in the afternoon. The summer between junior and senior year includes learning hands-on skills and competencies through full-time employment with an area manufacturing company. During the senior year, students spend half the day at their high school and the remaining half at their employer. Finally, the summer following high school graduation, students complete final competencies and apprenticeship requirements through full-time employment.

Upon completion of the Northwest Iowa Best Welding Apprenticeship, students have the choice to continue full-time employment with an area manufacturing company or to finish the requirements for NCC’s Welding Diploma or Associate of Applied Science degree. A student could also choose to tackle both. No matter which option a student chooses, the program will set students up for success in the manufacturing industry. The Northwest Iowa Best Welding Apprenticeship is a solution that will help to solve the skills gap and manufacturing shortage in Northwest Iowa.
Officials from Rosenboom were on campus to donate a Collaborative Robot to NCC’s advanced manufacturing programs this past spring.

A Collaborative Robot, many times referred to as a cobot robot, is a robot which is new to the manufacturing world. The cobot that NCC received was built by Universal Robots and is equipped with a gripper-end effector. These robots are designed to pick and place items in different configurations depending on the manufacturers’ specific needs and end effector in use. There are many different end effectors that are available, thus making this robot very versatile in the manufacturing world. Different types of configurations manufacturers may use include: palletizing, boxing, placement of parts into another machine, welding, or even painting.

Jason Van Meeteren, Assistant Plant Manager at Rosenboom, Sheldon, said, “A few months ago we were on campus talking to manufacturing students about Rosenboom and career opportunities and while we were here we toured the new welding and Idea Labs and were very impressed with both.

Rosenboom designed the cart and the mounting hardware for this robot and also created several demonstration programs for NCC instructors to use as a sampling of what the software can do. Ethan Camarigg, CNC Mill Support, from Rosenboom demonstrated several operations that the cobot could perform and answered questions from the Welding students who were there to see the new piece of equipment.

This robot will be used mainly in NCC’s robotics classes, but will also be integrated on a smaller scale into other programs like the Industrial Instrumentation & Control program. Students will learn how to operate the cobot so they will be fully trained to enter the manufacturing industry. This will include learning how to program the cobot and learning how to troubleshoot any problems that may arise during operation.

Steve Waldstein, Dean of Applied Technology, said, “This donation is a sophisticated piece of equipment costing about $30,000. It is a welcome addition to the technology in the Advanced Manufacturing Center at NCC – especially the Idea Lab. NCC is constantly upgrading the equipment in our labs, so that we teach the Manufacturing 4.0 Training that is necessary for our students to learn in today’s highly skilled advanced manufacturing environments. NCC’s students have access to learn on the newest and most sophisticated technology and graduate with the skills they need to enter the great field of Advanced Manufacturing.”

The Idea Lab is part of NCC’s Advanced Manufacturing Center. It is an educational space that is a STEM-based interactive lab for all credit and non-credit programs of the College to use. Numerous custom workforce training classes are conducted for area business and industry partners along with the K-12 summer camps that all have access to this innovative space.

For more information about cobot robots visit: universal-robots.com.
When undergoing a new athletic program like this, years of prep work are needed. Initial tasks to get the program started include: hiring coaches, recruiting students, finding additional student housing, and, of course, securing a playing field.

Northwest Iowa Community College is working in collaboration with the Sheldon Community School District to build a turf athletic field, which would be located at the Sheldon High School athletic complex. The field is scheduled to be installed in the Summer of 2022, and will be ready for use by the Sheldon Community High School in the Fall of 2022 for their soccer, football and marching band programs. NCC will likely play its first intercollegiate soccer match on the field in Fall 2024.

“This initiative has been years in the making. Studies have shown that intercollegiate athletics can attract and retain new students. The soccer program should not only increase the number of students attending NCC, but it will also enhance our overall collegiate experience,” said Dr. John Hartog, President of Northwest Iowa Community College.

Fun fact: 14 out of the 15 community colleges in the state of Iowa have intercollegiate sports. NCC became #14 when it began men’s and women’s sports shooting three years ago. And now, NCC hopes to start its newest intercollegiate program, soccer, in the next few years.
Each year one outstanding graduate of Northwest Iowa Community College is recognized for his or her professional and personal accomplishments. The recipient of the 2020–2021 Outstanding Alumnus of the Year award is Andy Jacobs of Sutherland. Andy is a 2002 Diesel Technology graduate and is currently employed as the Branch Operations Manager at Ziegler CAT in Sheldon. The 2020–2021 Alumnus of the Year recognition was held in conjunction with the College’s Open House & Ribbon-Cutting of Building D on September 21, 2021.

Andy Jacobs grew up in rural Northwest Iowa. Growing up in a trucking family, he developed an interest in trucks and equipment at an early age. He began NCC’s Diesel Technology program in the fall of 1999. Upon completion of the program, he held various mechanic positions. Andy worked as a mechanic and field technician for Tom’s Repair in Granville; a County Mechanic for O’Brien County Secondary Roads; a Shop Supervisor for Ziegler CAT in Sheldon; and was promoted to his current position of Branch Operations Manager in 2018. Andy currently oversees 25 employees, including field service technicians that are dispatched throughout Northwest Iowa.

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Andy remains connected to NCC through serving as Chairperson of the NCC Diesel Technology Program Advisory Committee and as a member of the NCC Foundation Board. He is involved with Skills USA, serving as both a student and professional member since 2006. Andy has employed numerous student interns at Ziegler CAT and is constantly looking for opportunities to educate young people about the diesel industry.

Andy’s family includes his wife, Becky, and their three children, Emmet, William and Jolie.

Andy’s success is our story!

Northwest Iowa Community College is currently accepting nominations for the 2022 NCC Outstanding Alumnus of the Year.

Do you know of an NCC graduate who has done outstanding work in his or her industry? Has done exceptional volunteer work? Has contributed to NCC student success? Received a prestigious award or obtained another notable achievement?

If so, please nominate this individual at nwicc.edu/alumnus-of-the-year or scan the code below.

Nominate someone for the 2022 ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR!

stay connected

At NCC, we love to stay connected to our alumni. We know our graduates are doing great things, using the skills and knowledge obtained and living great lives. NCC wants to hear about it!

With over 12,500 alumni, NCC strives to stay connected in a variety of ways.

- The Connection Magazine
- Alumni Association Advisory Committee
- Annual Outstanding Alumnus of the Year
- Alumni Facebook group
- E-Connection newsletter
- Alumni Appreciation Events
- Alumni Reunions
- And more!

We want to stay connected with you! Did you get a promotion? Did you finish another degree? Did you get married? Have you had a baby? Send us your updates to NCC:

alumni@nwicc.edu
(800) 352-4907 ext. 230
bit.ly/NCC-alumniupdate

We can’t wait to hear from you!
Get to know these employees who joined the NCC team in 2021!

**Sarah Pearce**
Tutor/Specialist—Learning Center
Hartley

**Experience:** Sarah attended the University of Northern Iowa where she studied chemistry and physics. While there she obtained her first experience in tutoring by serving as a Peer Tutor to student athletes. After UNI, she went on to earn her Masters degree in Physics from Montana State University. She worked as a TA leading labs, grading assignments, and tutoring undergraduate students. For the last three years, she has been working in children’s programming at the Hartley Public Library. Sarah has enjoyed working with young people in the community and is happy to see some of them attending NCC!

**Randy Baartman**
Director of Physical Facilities
Hull

**Experience:** Randy’s most recent position was the Head of Maintenance at Boyden-Hull Community Schools, where he was employed for 24 years. Randy is excited to join the NCC team!

**Ken Walvoort**
Electrical Maintenance Technician
Sioux Center

**Experience:** Ken completed an electrical apprenticeship and served as a journeyman electrician in various positions, most recently in the Maintenance Department at Dordt University. Ken is looking forward to serving on the maintenance team at NCC.

**Kendra Wartnaby**
Coordinator of Industry Training/Continuing Education
Spencer

**Experience:** Kendra has over 20 years of manufacturing experience both on the shop floor (mostly assembly and CNC machining) and in supervisory positions. For the last 3½ years she was a production supervisor at Sekisui Aerospace in Orange City. Kendra is eager to bring her scheduling and manufacturing knowledge to NCC!

**Gary DeRaad**
Plumbing Maintenance Technician
Boyden

**Experience:** Gary has owned and operated his own plumbing and heating business in Boyden for the last 24 years. This has given him experience in working with lots of different appliances and equipment that we are sure will benefit NCC greatly.

**Brian Nash**
Executive Director of Operations & Finance
Spencer

**Experience:** Brian is a graduate of Simpson College with a Bachelor’s Degree in Accounting, and he is a Certified Public Accountant. He has worked in banking, insurance, governmental utilities, agriculture, and food manufacturing. He has held the roles of Controller and Chief Financial Officer in three industries with experience in capital projects, budgeting, cost accounting and financial reporting. He most recently served as Operations Controller for Rembrandt Foods. He is excited to provide leadership to the operations and finance areas of NCC.
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Kelsey Koops
CNA Compliance & Education Specialist
Orange City

**Experience:** Kelsey is a Registered Nurse and has worked for the Orange City Area Health System for the past 14 years, starting as a CNA and then as a Nurse for their nursing homes. Most recently she has been a Case Manager for Home Health and Hospice. Providing dignity, respect, and friendship to older adults has been a top priority for her and something she hopes to instill in NCC students, to help build the future of healthcare!

Ashley Peters
Enrollment Management Specialist
Little Rock

**Experience:** For the last five years, Ashley has worked for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach as a County Youth Coordinator. She has loved working with the youth to help them master their goals. She looks forward to continuing to work with students of all ages, helping them better themselves both professionally and personally. Ashley is so excited to bring her passion and excitement to NCC!

Keri Siebrecht
Learning Center/Alternative High School Assistant
Sheldon

**Experience:** Keri graduated from NCC in December 2020 with an Administrative Office Assistant Diploma. As a student, she was a Student Ambassador for the Admissions Office and also worked at the LLRC this past year. Keri is pleased to start this journey in her new role at NCC!

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Erin Latona
Executive Dean of Student & Academic Services
Spencer

**Experience:** Erin’s professional background includes leadership positions in a variety of academic settings. Her most recent position was at Southeast Community College in Lincoln, NE, as Associate Dean of Business, Computer Information Technology/ Electronics, and the Skilled Trades Divisions. Erin’s professional areas of interest include student-centered initiatives designed to close achievement gaps; growth-oriented, collaborative leadership; online instruction and curriculum development; and assessment processes and training. Erin is very thrilled and grateful for the opportunity to join the NCC team!

Shante Whalen
Instructor—Psychology
Spencer

**Experience:** Shante obtained her undergraduate degree in Psychology and graduate degree in Mental Health Counseling from Minnesota State University, Mankato. Shante is a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC), previously providing outpatient therapy to people of all ages and recently leading the Assertive Community Treatment Team as the team lead and mental health therapist. During her college experience she completed her graduate assistantship in the admissions department, finding her love for the collegiate atmosphere. Missing this environment, Shante is delighted to be back on a campus and working with college students!

Josie Hermanson
Instructor—Alternative HS
Meriden

**Experience:** Josie has been working as an elementary school teacher at a small school in Texas for the last eight years. She is looking forward to working with older students at the alternative high school on campus. Josie believes that every student can learn given the right tools and the right environment.

NCC Employees who have changed positions in 2021:

- **Kevin Connor:** Full-Time Custodian
- **Leah Murphy:** Dean—Arts & Sciences/Business & Health
- **Kelsey Van Beek:** Radiologic Technology Program Director
- **Lacey Steffen:** Clinical Coordinator—Radiologic Technology
- **Mindy Albrecht:** College Store Coordinator
- **John Hartog:** President
- **Mariah Oliver:** Student Support Coordinator/Grant Writer
- **Renee Franklin:** Director Academic Center & Library Services
- **Jodi Siebrecht:** College Store Clerk
- **Godfrey Twinamatsiko:** Instructor—Math
- **Natalie Cox:** Data Entry Specialist
- **Samson Nyambati:** TRIO SSS Multicultural Academic Coordinator
- **Kalie Kruger:** Payroll & Benefits Specialist
- **Megan Lovan:** Accounting Clerk

**Experience:** Bizzy is currently pursuing a Master’s Degree in Theology through Seattle Pacific Seminary. She is eager to work in the Learning Center and to be part of the NCC community!

Bizzy Feekes
Tutor/Specialist—Learning Center
Sheldon

**Experience:** Bizzy is currently pursuing a Master’s Degree in Theology through Seattle Pacific Seminary. She is eager to work in the Learning Center and to be part of the NCC community!
What are YOU up to?

We love to connect with alums and want to hear your stories of success! Email alumni@nwicc.edu or go to nwicc.edu/alumni-foundation/what-are-you-doing to share your latest update! Your success is our story!

Juniors and Seniors... join us for
THUNDER FRIDAYS
@ NORTHWEST IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

All junior and senior visitors attending a Thunder Friday Visit Day will receive
$100 of THUNDER CASH

The Thunder cash will be in the form of a debit card used for NCC merchandise at the NCC College Store. Limit one Thunder cash card per academic year.

Includes a full campus tour, a program meeting, a current NCC student session, and an Admissions meeting! Sessions fill up fast so sign up today!

Nondiscrimination in Education Statement
It is the policy of Northwest Iowa Community College not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed, religion, and actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by federal and state civil rights statutes and all other applicable federal and state laws, regulations and orders. The Board of Trustees also monitor progress on this policy through the President's appointed Affirmative Action/Equity Coordinator(s).

If you have any questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy, please contact one of the Equity Coordinators at Northwest Iowa Community College, 603 West Park Street, Sheldon, Iowa, room D403b or room A101D, email equity@nwicc.edu, phone number 712-324-5061, extension 113 or 137, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Seventh Street S.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20202-5660, email OCR.Chicago@ed.gov, phone number 312-976-8000.