The Aspen Institute selected NCC as a Top-10 Finalist for the 2023 Aspen Prize. NCC is one of the few colleges that have been among the top 150 eligible colleges for this best-practices competition during all seven of the award cycles (2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2023). This past year was the first time that NCC was named a Top-10 Finalist, and it reflects the good results of the College’s many partnerships.

Unexpectedly, Justin Blauwet of DGR Engineering, discovered the fossil of a woolly mammoth tooth during some underground work on campus. The fossil captured the imagination of many people. The find connected our campus to creatures that lived in this region thousands of years ago. We wonder how many more fossils are hidden below the surface of our campus—just waiting to be excavated during our next building project.

Over the summer, we held Scrubs Camp so that 60 middle school and high school students could explore healthcare-related careers. During the Camp, we unveiled our new simulation ambulance—made possible by collaborations with Arrow Ambulance of Rock Rapids, a grant from the Lyon County Riverboat Foundation, and the expert work of our diesel students and instructors. With the ambulance, NCC is already enhancing emergency medical technician (EMT) training. Long-term this will improve the health and wellbeing of those who live in Northwest Iowa.
Speaking of healthcare, we are making plans for a ribbon-cutting and open-house of our new Building H “Health Sciences Building.” Please mark your calendar—April 27, 2023. Then join us on campus to celebrate this two-story community achievement.

Our heavy equipment students helped to complete the sitework for the Turf Field. NCC will host its intercollegiate men’s and women’s soccer competitions on this field in 2024. The Turf Field proves again the power of partnerships. The Sheldon CSD, the City of Sheldon, and numerous businesses and individuals made it happen. The Turf Field is now a reality, and soccer is in our future. Go team THUNDER!

The Honorable Kim Reynolds, Governor of Iowa, visited our campus in June. She toured the Applied Technology Building and the Diesel and Automotive labs. We were excited to show the Governor these newer areas of the College and to thank her for the state’s investments in NCC’s career and technical education. The state and the College have together increased capacity to train skilled workers for industries.

Miller Electric donated a new MobileArc™ Augmented Reality Welding System for the Welding Lab. This contribution exemplifies the many partnerships that NCC has with area industries. Together we have remodeled, upgraded, and enhanced our educational experiences with simulators—not only in our Welding Lab, but all across campus. I am also happy to report that we have record high enrollments in our Welding Programs this fall.

We are thrilled that 11 new employees have joined Team NCC. We believe their skills, experiences and creativity will benefit our Team greatly.

We commemorate the successful career of our Dean of Applied Technology, Steve Waldstein. Under his decade of leadership, the division took huge steps forward. Many students received better training because Steve is passionate about education and the skilled trades.

This past year we also experienced profound loss. Dr. Alethea Stubbe, NCC’s ninth president, left this life. She impacted NCC throughout her three decades at NCC—as an instructor, administrator, and president. We miss her, and we have re-dedicated ourselves to continue in her footsteps by moving the College forward.

Yes, we have experienced a year of collaborations, celebrations, and commemorations. Partnerships have made it all possible. Thank you for supporting your community College. As we look to the future, we know that together we will accomplish more.

John Hartog III, PhD
President
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NCC Employees gather and celebrate the start of the Fall Semester and the Top Ten Aspen Prize designation!
The Honorable Kim Reynolds, Governor of Iowa, stopped by the campus of Northwest Iowa Community College on June 6, 2022, touring the recently constructed Applied Technology Building and the renovated Diesel and Automotive labs. Some of the highlights of the tour were showcasing a few of the Accelerated Career Education (ACE) funded campus building projects, credit and non-credit programs funded through the Employer Innovation Fund, Summer Youth Internships funded through the Future Ready Iowa initiative, and some of the Concurrent Enrollment programming (high school students taking college courses) within the Applied Technology programs.

The Governor said, “I can tell you are all very excited about the work you do here. Northwest Iowa Community College knows how critical the future workforce is to our State and economy. NCC is checking all the boxes and utilizing several state programs to help train their students for the high-demand careers in the automotive, manufacturing, and health care fields.

The Governor toured the recently constructed labs with some of the NCC Administration and the President of the Board of Trustees, Adam Besaw. She also met with students and instructors from the Diesel Technology and Automotive & Light Duty Diesel Technology programs. She took time to shake the students’ and instructors’ hands and to ask them questions about their programs.

Dr. John Hartog, NCC President, stated, “We were excited to show the Governor these newer areas of the College that have increased NCC’s capacity to train skilled workers in Northwest Iowa. As we continue to build partnerships like the Snap-on Tools partnership, and most recently the development of our Industrial Maintenance non-credit training program, our students and Northwest Iowa will experience the benefits and outcomes of these essential cooperative relationships.”

The Governor was on campus as part of her 99-county tour.

Governor Kim Reynolds Visits Northwest Iowa Community College

NCC is providing great opportunities for Northwest Iowans.”
The Aspen Institute has named Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC) one of the ten finalists for the 2023 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Started in 2010, the $1 million Aspen Prize is the nation’s signature recognition of community colleges that are achieving high, improving, and equitable outcomes for students. The ten finalists represent the great potential of America’s thousand-plus community colleges as engines of prosperity and social mobility.

The finalists also represent the impressive diversity of community colleges, from NCC, with its 2,700 students granting primarily technical awards, to a 57,000-student college in Florida with a focus on transfer and bachelor’s degree attainment. Regardless of their size or location, excellent community colleges like NCC are defined by their focus on outcomes and by their strategies to develop the students’ talents in ways that strengthen their regional economies and communities. NCC contributes to the strength and vitality of Northwest Iowa by providing quality, accessible, and affordable education to all our students.

Dr. John Hartog, president of NCC, commented, “Being named a top-10 finalist for the Aspen Prize is a significant honor. NCC is one of the few colleges that has been among the top 150 colleges to be eligible for the Aspen Prize all seven times since the competition’s inception (2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2023). The Aspen competition process has inspired NCC to serve its students better, and for this we are grateful.” Hartog continued, “This top-10 recognition speaks well of our employees and Trustees since they serve our students. The ranking highlights the great work of our students as they graduate and enter our workforce.

Awarded every two years, the Aspen Prize honors colleges that show outstanding performance in five critical areas: teaching and learning, certificate and degree completion, transfer and bachelor’s attainment, workforce success, and equitable outcomes for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. The winner will be announced in the spring of 2023.

“The honor goes to Northwest Iowans since they love and support NCC.”
"We’re grateful to all the experts who have helped Aspen identify these impressive colleges,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. “We can’t wait to dive in to learn more about how they have achieved these measurable student outcomes so we can share what we learn with the field.”

The Aspen Prize selection process began in October 2021, when the Aspen Institute worked with an expert data panel to craft a formula to assess student outcomes at nearly 1,000 community colleges in key areas such as retention, completion, transfer, and equity. Based on those data points, we invited 150 top community colleges to apply, and received 109 applications. A selection committee of 16 higher education experts reviewed applications, including extensive data and narratives on student success strategies. From the 25 highest ranking colleges, which were announced as semifinalists in April, the committee met in May to choose the 10 Aspen Prize finalists.

NEXT STEPS INCLUDE:

• Fall 2022: Gathering additional data on student outcomes, including employment after college and multi-day site visits to each of the 10 finalists to collect insights about effective practices
• Winter of 2023: Decision by a distinguished jury of the Aspen Prize winner based on quantitative data and qualitative information from each of the 10 finalists
• Late spring 2023: Announcement of the Aspen Prize winner

The Aspen Prize is generously funded by Ascendium, the Joyce Foundation, JPMorgan, and the Kresge Foundation.

Previous winners are:

• 2021: San Antonio College (TX)
• 2019: Indian River State College (FL) and Miami Dade College (FL)
• 2017: Lake Area Technical Institute (SD)
• 2015: Santa Fe College (FL)
• 2013: Santa Barbara City College (CA) and Walla Walla Community College (WA)
• 2011: Valencia College (FL)

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes, especially for the growing population of low-income students and students of color on American campuses. For more information, visit www.highered.aspeninstitute.org.

The Aspen Institute is a community-serving organization with global reach whose vision is a free, just, and equitable society. For 70 years, the Institute has driven change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the world’s greatest challenges. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Institute has offices in Aspen, Colorado, and New York City, New York and an international network of partners. For more information, visit www.aspeninstitute.org.

2023 ASPEN PRIZE FINALISTS

10 EXEMPLARY COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Amarillo College, TX
Broward College, FL
Hostos Community College (CUNY), NY
Imperial Valley College, CA
Kingsborough Community College (CUNY), NY
Moorpark College, CA
Northwest Iowa Community College, IA
San Jacinto College, TX
South Puget Sound Community College, WA
Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, WI
It’s not a phone call a college president expects — “We found a fossil on your property. We think it’s a woolly mammoth tooth,” but that is just what happened to NCC President Dr. Hartog this spring. Still in his first year as President at the time, Hartog knew that he should expect the unexpected, but, “…a fossilized mammoth tooth isn’t something they teach you to expect when you are preparing to become a college president!”

Justin Blauwet, DGR Engineering technician, was on campus looking over a lift station project for the City of Sheldon when he saw the fossil resting on top of a pile of dirt. It had been excavated for the ongoing project several days before. Blauwet’s keen eye, natural curiosity, and love for fossilized remains took over.
Blauwet brought the large fossil back to the DGR offices in Rock Rapids, where the relic was measured and weighed: 11.2 pounds and 11 inches.

Officials at DGR, the City of Sheldon, and the College reported the find to Tiffany Adrian, a paleontology repository instructor and the Special Collections Manager at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Adrian confirmed it was, in fact, a woolly mammoth tooth fossil.

The fossil was brought back to NCC’s campus for a short period of time so employees could see it, but College officials have decided to semi-permanently loan the fossil to the Sheldon Historical Society in order for community members to have access to it and easily view it.

When fossils are dug up, they are naturally saturated with water. They need time to be properly dried and preserved correctly. The mammoth tooth made its public debut during the City of Sheldon’s 150th birthday celebration in September. You can now view the fossil at the Sheldon Historical Society during regular business hours.

“Since NCC is the public college for the area communities, NCC is happy to display the tooth in the Sheldon Prairie Museum as a semi-permanently loaned display,” said Hartog. “This way, everyone from across our service area can come to the museum to see and appreciate this artifact.”

Meanwhile, Den Hartog Industries of Hospers provided a 3-D Image so that Ryan Steffen, an NCC industrial design technology instructor, could 3-D print a detailed, life-sized replica of the fossil.

Hartog observed, “An engineering technician, a neighboring city, a local museum, a plastics manufacturer, NCC, and a mammoth—all successfully partnered together in this dynamic and unexpected way.”
Thank you to all of our sponsors who made this event a success:

• Sanford Sheldon
• Sheldon Community Ambulance Team (SCAT)
• Wings Air Rescue
• Orange City Area Health System
• Osceola Regional Health System
• Lakes Regional Healthcare
• Prairie View Campus
• Iowa Intermediary Network

Thank you!
On Tuesday, June 28, Northwest Iowa Community College’s Health Science programs hosted over 60 area middle school and high school students for “Scrubs Camp” to explore the career fields of: EMS, Nursing, CNA, Radiologic Technology, Pharmacy Technology, Medical Lab Technology, Surgical Technician, Health Information Technology, and Medical Coding.

The day consisted of eight mini-sessions in which each program instructor explained their respective career field and NCC’s program. Each session also included a hands-on activity where students could “scrub up” with professionals from each of the healthcare careers.

The students then watched an emergency care live action simulation performed by NCC healthcare instructors, alongside the Sheldon Community Ambulance Team (SCAT), in which all of the healthcare programs worked together for a common goal of saving the patient — just like in a real emergency situation.

The simulation was of an emergency trauma scenario in which a person was involved in a vehicle accident because of texting and driving. They then assessed the “car accident patient” (volunteer crash victim) and brought the patient into the college from the simulated car accident in the parking lot. Once inside the emergency room (NCC classroom), the instructors took over the simulation using high fidelity manikin simulation technology (purchased with a grant from the Lyon County Riverboat Foundation) to play the role of the car accident patient. After the patient was diagnosed with injuries and stabilized, the last step of this simulation was to prepare the patient for transport to a regional hospital by air.

Samantha Berends, an incoming sophomore at Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn (HMS) High School, said, “I have received a lot of great information. I am here for the career exploration. I am interested in nursing and wanted to see what it was all about. I was also able to learn about so many other career opportunities today as well. This was very beneficial.”

As the day ended, Kevin Miller, NCC Emergency Services Education Coordinator and Kim Karhoff, Director of Nursing Education, answered student questions and spoke to the students about the importance of teamwork in a healthcare setting. Miller said,

“Healthcare is more than just one individual doing a single task; it is a combination of many people working together for a common goal.”

It is important for students to understand that every career in healthcare has a vital role in patient outcomes and the management of the healthcare system as a whole.”

Karhoff added, “We loved hosting students on campus to highlight different healthcare careers. It is valuable for students to see the importance of teamwork in the healthcare fields. We look forward to having students again next year in our new Building H addition.”
It's no secret—industry needs skilled welders. Welding is a fine skill, and to an employer, the best welders are worth their weight in gold (or steel!) And like many skilled trade occupations, the number of people qualified to work in the industry is far below the number of job openings.

Don Van Den Top, Director of Human Resources at Link Mfg. in Sioux Center, verifies this urgent need. “Right now, I don’t know of a manufacturer who isn’t looking for a skilled welder.

“NCC is excited that the Welding program is looking as bright as the arc that emits from a welding rod. The program is seeing record enrollments. Twenty-five full-time students are registered for classes this fall. Additionally, eight local high school students will take part-time classes on campus to learn the basics of welding.

Robert Hoting, instructor of NCC’s Welding program, is excited for the elevated interest. In his twenty-four years of teaching, this is his largest class. And with interest like this, the College has hired a welding lab assistant to aid in instruction.

Hoting believes that the recent spike in interest is due to a number of factors, including awareness of the new, state-of-the-art welding lab, which NCC renovated in 2019. “Once a prospective student tours the lab, they are usually hooked. It’s a big draw. It’s clean, spacious, and cutting edge.” Additionally, successful welding alumni give credibility to employers and are silent recruiters for prospective students. The word is out on the success of the program. Hoting notes that he is seeing more and more students from further away attend, sometimes from as far away as Muscatine, IA. They chose NCC’s program because of its reputation.
NCC's Welding program is as bright as an arc coming from a welding rod. The welding industry has changed immensely over the past decades. Welding equipment is more sophisticated and intuitive. Hoting indicated that when he began teaching at NCC, pulse welding (advanced method of MIG welding) was not as commonly used in industry as it is now. As a result of technology changes, the variables in old pulse systems have been reduced, so instruction and operation of this commonly used welding technique is streamlined. Changes in technology make welding environments cleaner, from air quality to physical surfaces. There is less "welding spatter," which also means less cleaning of the weld after it's completed, making it nearly paint booth ready. This fact alone creates significant efficiency improvements in manufacturing plants. Additionally, the use of robotic welders has changed the industry. Robotic welders create more consistent welds than humans are able to do, and are safer for the employees to use. Robotic welders do not diminish the need for people in the welding industry, but changes the daily operation of the job. People who work with robotic welders are doing more programming of the machine and inspections of the finished product instead of holding a welding torch.

Welding is taught in multiple formats through NCC. Beyond the traditional "for credit" coursework, NCC offers not-for-credit classes which can be customized to industry needs and taught directly to business partners. Most of the time, this method trains current welders in new approaches. GAP tuition assistance training is also offered through NCC's Welding department, which offers short-term training for people who are underemployed and need quick training to meet industry needs.

Miller Electric of Appleton, WI, is a great partner in welding instruction. Because Miller Electric sees the need to recruit and retain skilled welders, they recently donated a MobileArc™ Augmented Reality Welding System to our welding program. This piece of equipment is a fantastic training tool that not only educates a potential student on some basics of welding (like how gun angle and speed are critical to a good weld) but also offers current students a way to enhance skills that need improvement in a more cost-effective method. Training in an augmented capacity saves resources such as welding gases, wire, and metals. This handheld device is extremely portable, which enables it to be transported from the classroom to career fairs and industry demonstrations with ease.

"The augmented reality aspect is great to help build muscle memory for new welders. It's just like in sports where repetition creates success; the same is true for welding. Muscle memory can be developed with tools like this," says Robert Schuster, District Manager for Miller Electric.

The technology can give training in flat, T joint and lap joint welds, gives a score of success, and will even play back the action so that the welder can rewatch his or her work to look for ways to improve.

The future of welding is very promising. There are no signs that the industry will slow down, and changes in welding practices are guaranteed to evolve, especially as robotics continue to play a significant role in process control. "It's great money and a great career, and welding can take you wherever your motivation drives you," says Hoting. He notes that his alums can stay local, but he knows of alums of NCC's welding program who have done significant work on other continents. "Your ambition can take you anywhere in this industry. I recently had an alum who spent six months welding in Africa on a special project from his employer."

For more information on NCC’s welding program, or to learn more about educational opportunities at NCC, call 800-352-4907.

Robert Schuster, District Manager for Miller Electric, demonstrates how to use the MobileArc™ Augmented Reality Welding System.
Steve Waldstein, Dean of Applied Technology, has been a mainstay on campus for ten years. He has led the Applied Technology division through some of the biggest changes in the College’s history. Leading by example and a core value of student success, Steve is now retiring due to a genetic disorder that has progressed, making it hard for him to continue with the rigorous schedule his job demands.

“I was diagnosed with Spinal and Bulbar Muscular Atrophy (SBMA) which is a cousin to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). ALS is a fast-moving decline in muscle ability; SBMA progresses relatively slowly,” said Waldstein. “I was diagnosed a few years ago. I first started noticing my balance was off. I would accidently run into things and just chalked it up to being clumsy or getting older. I finally sought a medical explanation when I fell down my stairs for no apparent reason and broke my collar bone. I just knew something was off.”

Waldstein decided to take “retirement” or medical disability leave now rather than waiting until his medical condition had progressed any further. “I have my good days, but they aren’t consistent and there are fewer of them as time goes on. If I overdo something one day, it can take me several days to recover. I just couldn’t keep up the physical pace I needed at work to be successful,” stated Waldstein.

Waldstein’s career crisscrosses across the state of Iowa and, indeed, the world. From having the opportunity to work in every state in the nation except Alaska, to far off destinations like China and Australia, Waldstein has made an impact teaching all over the globe.

He started his teaching career in Iowa at Dike-New Hartford (DNH) high school as an Industrial Technology teacher and girls’ basketball and track coach. Something that Waldstein is proud of during this time period was the development of a partnership with the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). It would bring future UNI Industrial Technology Education students to DNH for their Level 3 Field Experience class. Waldstein said, “Basically, I would assess the students and decide whether they were ready for the classroom—ready for student teaching.” He was also very proud of increasing female participation in the Industrial Technology programs.

From DNH he went to Emerson Process Management, Fisher Division, where he was an instrumentation and chemical engineer instructor. “I was able to travel the United States and the world with this job. I would trouble shoot instrumentation issues, set up flow loops, and work with chemical engineers. During that period of time I was in 49 of the 50 states. I was also able to go to Australia, where in my free time I swam the Great Barrier Reef, and China, where I was able to walk on the Great Wall.”

By this time Waldstein had a growing family and wanted to be home more. He took a job at Armstrong-Ringsted high school as their Industrial Technology teacher, varsity football and track coach, curriculum director, and website administrator, and he was in charge of all the professional development. “The trade and technology program had been closed for a couple of years and I was able to restart it. Two things really stand out about my time there: I was able to start a very active Engineering Club that attracted both males and females to engineering, and in football we went to the state championship game four times and won twice.”

That brings Waldstein to NCC. In 2012 he started as the Dean of the Applied Technology division. Waldstein took over a successful division and he knew his challenge was to make NCC’s great programs even greater.

“A DECADE OF SERVICE TO NCC

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I knew the talent and subject matter experts were at the College and the programs were great, but where I saw room for improvement were the facilities and ongoing strategic professional development. We needed the College to physically represent and look as good as the content.curriculum of the programs and the teaching that was going on inside the classrooms and labs. I also wanted to improve the professional development plans for the faculty. They were good, but I knew with strategic professional development they would go from good to great!”
Steve was a key supporter of the General Obligation Bond the College passed in 2018. He knew the facilities and the optics they showed to the community, business partners, and future students didn’t match the level of work going on in the College’s nationally award-winning programs. The teaching and program curriculum were good at NCC, but the facilities portrayed when they were built—the 1960’s. Waldstein commented, “How could we look like we were teaching state-of-the-art programs if we looked like we were stuck in the 1960’s or 1970’s. It was time to improve the classrooms and labs. You never get a second chance at a first impression. The facilities and the optics they carried with it were holding us back.”

He played an integral role in the passing of the GO Bond and in the design of the new buildings. Some of the changes under Waldstein’s leadership include: the new Applied Technology Building that is home to the Heavy Equipment & Maintenance program, the Building D renovation and expansion which houses the Automotive and Diesel programs, moving the Welding program from Building D to Building C so it could be side-by-side with the other Manufacturing programs, and the creation of the Idea Lab in Building C.

Another accomplishment that holds a sense of pride for Waldstein is the development of the partnership with Snap-on Tools. “We saw over and over students who couldn’t enter the Transportation programs because of financial barriers. We developed this partnership so not only could students have access to the best tools and technology we could provide, but also to eliminate the huge expense of buying tools before they started their first class.”

Waldstein was excited that the College could find a way for students to not have thousands of dollars in tool expense before even starting the program. Financial aid cannot be used to purchase tools, so this was a financial barrier for some students. “One of the missions of a community college, in my opinion, is career exploration,” stated Waldstein. “It was hard for a student to pay thousands of dollars for professional tools just to explore a career. Now, they can take a semester or two and discover if mechanics is their passion before investing financial resources out-of-pocket for their tools.”

Another positive aspect of the partnership is how students invest each semester in a small tool fee, and then when they graduate they have a complete set of professional-grade tools waiting for them. Waldstein said, “This is a great benefit for each student—they can pay little-by-little with no accumulating interest charges. This way the students receive a complete set of Snap-on tools when they graduate with the option to buy whatever they want at a really good school discount. They are totally prepared when they graduate to enter their professional careers.”

“This really affects families”, said Waldstein. “College is a big financial burden, and this relieves a lot of stress not only for the student, but also their families. The first year we implemented this process, I had a mother of a student come up to me in tears at orientation because she didn’t know how they were going to pay for their son’s tools. This was an unexpected blessing for them and allowed the student to enroll in the program.”

Waldstein wanted to convey, “…and these are words I live by, I expected my faculty to be the best teachers they could be each day in the classroom — to do their best every day. I wanted them to keep growing, keep learning, and to keep evaluating themselves. I wanted them to make clear their passion for their subject and to let their students see it because, many times, the students will follow suit.” Waldstein finished with, “The time at NCC for me was a lot of blood, sweat, and some tears, but...

“as a collaborative team we accomplished a lot.”

Waldstein now plans to volunteer at Sanford Senior Care as a companion and at Sheldon’s East Elementary school reading to students and helping with STEM activities in the classroom.
SOCCER TIMELINE AND UPDATE:

As NCC continues to prepare for the rollout of collegiate soccer in the Fall of 2024, much of the prep work is currently underway. As one might expect, there is a lot more to rolling out a sports program than recruiting athletes and hiring a coach. A few current projects on the soccer expansion include:

- **Digital scoreboard** is up at the field (located at the Sheldon Community School District Athletic Complex)
- **Turf project** is complete and is being used by the Sheldon Community School District this fall.
- **Subcommittee work** by numerous small groups throughout NCC, including topics such as:
  - **Housing** facilities and meal plans for our athletes
  - Planning for all **transportation**, equipment and other needs
  - **Scholarship** procedures, recruiting and marketing
  - **Conference** affiliation paperwork
  - And more!

Other tentative milestones include hiring a coach and athletic director by the Spring of 2023, student athletic recruitment beginning in the Fall of 2023, and the first soccer season occurring in the Fall of 2024.
You may have heard that some Iowa community colleges are offering free tuition. It is absolutely true. This is made possible through a State of Iowa program called Future Ready Iowa—the Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship. Future Ready Iowa is a workforce initiative that started in 2019 which connects Iowans to the training and education required for high-paying jobs and careers that improve Iowans’ lives.

The goal of the Last-Dollar Scholarship program is to increase the number of Iowans with education and training in occupations that are in high demand throughout Iowa. The scholarship program will pay tuition—after applying non-repayable federal and state financial aid—for Iowans who enroll in one of the designated programs of study. All students will receive at least $500 even if their tuition is fully funded through other means, such as the Pell Grant. This effort is geared toward helping more Iowans into great jobs, meeting the needs of Iowa employers, and growing Iowa’s economy.

Karna Hofmeyer, Director of Financial Aid, said, “With this program, the State is investing in our students, our workforce, and our economy. The Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship is truly a game changer. Our students/graduates can achieve their educational and career goals, potentially entering the workforce with little to no student loan debt. Iowa businesses and industry benefit as well from an expanded qualified workforce in high-demand career fields.”

I want to say thank you and I will work hard and follow through and get a job in my field and in Iowa!

said Lindsay Mulder, Radiologic Technology Alumna (’20). “I think it is really good for the State of Iowa. This scholarship is targeted at careers in which the state has a shortage of workers. I think it is a win-win for everyone in the state. I wanted to stay close to home where my family and friends are.”

How do I apply for the Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship?
File the 2023-2024 FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at Studentaid.gov/FAFSA which is available beginning October 1. Please go to iowaCollegeAid.gov/LastDollar for deadline information. That’s it. If you qualify for the Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship, NCC will notify you with an award letter.

To find out more go to NCC’s website: https://nwicc.edu/future-ready-iowa. You can also contact NCC’s Financial Aid Office: 712-324-5061, finaid@nwicc.edu. At NCC – Your Success is Our Story!

Qualifying Programs at NCC
- Accounting/Clerical Accounting
- Advanced Welding Technology
- Agriculture - Online
- Associate Degree Nursing
- Associate Degree Nursing—Extended
- Automotive & Light Duty Diesel Technology
- Business
- Business Management
- Design Technology
- Diesel Technology
- Electrical Technology
- Engineering Design
- Health Information Technology—Online
- Heavy Equipment Operation & Maintenance
- Industrial & Commercial Wiring
- Industrial Instrumentation & Control
- Information Technology Specialist
- Medical Coding—Online
- Powerline
- Powerline Technology
- Practical Nursing
- Practical Nursing—Extended
- Production Welding
- Radiologic Technology
- Virtual Office/Virtual Administration - Online
- Web & Graphic Design

nwicc.edu/future-ready-iowa
On June 29, Dr. Alethea Stubbe, the ninth President of Northwest Iowa Community College, passed after a battle with cancer. Alethea was an integral part of NCC with her 30+ years of service. Her many contributions will continue to have positive effects upon future generations of northwest Iowans. Alethea’s teaching work and her administrative leadership at NCC have secured a place for her among those who have been most influential at NCC.

To honor Alethea and all her years of service to NCC, a tribute to her will be installed in the atrium of the new Building H on NCC’s campus. NCC will host a coffee, open to the public, to unveil the tribute and to remember and honor Alethea. Information on the date for this coffee will be forthcoming.

Additionally, the family is starting a scholarship in Alethea’s memory. If you would like to donate to the Alethea Stubbe Memorial Scholarship, please contact the college at 800-352-4907 ext. 164, or do so electronically at nwicc.edu/ncc-donation-form.

Others who recently passed who helped make NCC what it is today include:

- **Harvey Obbink**, Math Instructor ~ December 26, 2021
- **Lyle Mosier**, Heavy Equipment Instructor ~ February 24, 2022
- **Jerry White**, Social Science Instructor ~ June 29, 2022
- **Brian Hellenga**, Adjunct EMS Instructor ~ July 4, 2022
- **Gary Morris**, Powerline Instructor ~ July 4, 2022

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**Sonya Newkirk**
Healthcare Programs Clinical Coordinator
Primghar

**Experience:** Sonya received her Associate Degree in Nursing from NCC and then her Bachelors of Science in Nursing from Briar Cliff University online. She worked in the Neuro ICU in Sioux Falls for 2 years before moving back home to be closer to family. For the past 1 ½ years, Sonya has been working at the Spencer ICU. She thoroughly enjoyed her time there, but is excited for her new adventure at NCC!

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**DJ Van’t Hul**
Assistant Sports Shooting Coach
Rock Valley

**Experience:** DJ works full-time at Double HH Manufacturing in Rock Valley. In his spare time, he enjoys being in the outdoors as much as possible, doing activities such as hunting, fishing, and spending time with his family and friends.
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**Jakob Bilyeu**  
*Tull-Time Custodian*  
*Sheldon*

**Experience:** Jakob is a recent graduate of NCC’s Industrial and Commercial Wiring program. He is very detail oriented and is excited to take on this new role.

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**Brent Noteboom**  
*Diesel Technology Instructor*  
*Paullina*

**Experience:** Brent graduated in May of 2003 from Iowa Lakes Community College with a degree in Farm Equipment and Diesel Technology. Throughout the past 20 years, he has worked at John Deere in West Bend, IA and Freeman, SD, Tom’s Repair in Granville, IA, Agrivision, and most recently served as a warehouse and material coordinator for Northwest REC. We are excited for Brent to bring his extensive background in this field to the Diesel Technology Program at NCC!

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**Ginger Culpepper**  
*Lead Adult Education and Literacy Instructor*  
*Sioux Center*

**Experience:** Ginger has been teaching for the Adult Education and Literacy Department at NCC since 2015; she teaches ESL and the Reading and Writing classes for the High School Equivalency Diploma at NCC and in Sioux Center. She graduated from Louisiana College with a degree in English Education and has taught in various settings throughout her career, including public high schools and homeschool coops.

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**Sandi Altena**  
*Adult Education and Literacy Coordinator*  
*Sioux Center*

**Experience:** Sandi earned her Master’s and Doctorate degrees in Leadership and Higher Ed at the University of South Dakota. She has served at three universities; Dordt, Northwestern, and Colorado Christian. She loves working collaboratively, leading teams, and developing people. She has been living in Colorado for the past three years and can’t wait to get back home to northwest Iowa and begin her work at NCC. Sandi is excited to be part of this exciting community!

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**Adam “Shirley” Obbink**  
*Heavy Equipment Instructor*  
*Sheldon*

**Experience:** Shirley most recently worked as an Equipment Operator for Russell Tiling LLC in Bigelow, MN. He has been working in the heavy equipment field for 22 years and is excited to take on this new role at NCC!

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**Eric Spanjer**  
*Part-Time Diesel Technology Lab Assistant*  
*Sheldon*

**Experience:** For the past 11 years, Eric has owned and operated Sheldon Countryside Repair. He is excited to bring his expertise in diesel mechanics to the Diesel Technology program at NCC!

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**Randy Hogan**  
*Part-Time Welding Lab Assistant*  
*Sanborn*

**Experience:** Randy has been retired from the City of Sanborn Electric Utility for almost 2 years, after 24 years of service. Retirement has been great, but he feels that he still has more to offer and more to learn. Randy is looking forward to helping Robert and his students. He is sure there will be lots to learn and share in this new opportunity and he is excited to meet and know his new coworkers!

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**Robert Sigafus**  
*Part-Time Evening Custodian*  
*Sheldon*

**Experience:** Robert has been an active military member since 2010. He is currently attending NCC.

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**NCC Employees who have changed positions (October 2021–July 2022):**

- **Alicia Pennings:** Coordinator—Learning Management System and Digital Content
- **Holly DeGrote:** Director—Online Learning
- **Denise Truckenmiller:** Director—Human Resources
- **Sarah Fykstra:** Coordinator—Help Desk
- **Sarah Pearce:** Full-Time Learning Center Tutor Specialist
Congratulations to NCC's 2022 Outstanding Alumnus of the Year, Matt Mitchell. Matt is a 2004 Heavy Equipment Operation and Maintenance graduate and is currently the co-owner of Mitchell and Huss Excavation in George, Iowa.

After graduating from NCC, Matt worked for a highway crew for multiple years, and then went into business with a farmer where he fine-tuned his skills in demolition work, waterway construction and general dirt moving. In 2012, Matt partnered with Ben Huss to establish Mitchell & Huss Excavating. Over the past decade they have constructed waterways, hog confinement pits, and industrial parks, and did new construction dirt work for residential homes. They are well-established at side dump hauling, precision laser and GPS grading, terraces, utility work, drainage and more. As of 2022, they have seven employees, including five NCC alums, and continually expand their business.

Matt sits on the NCC Heavy Equipment advisory board, has participated in recruiting and marketing campaigns for the college, and utilizes NCC for different aspects of employee training. He is also very involved in his local community. He previously served as city Zoning Administrator, and is finishing his second term as a member of the George Community Development Corporation.

In the thirty years that NCC has recognized an outstanding Alumnus of the Year, Matt is the first Heavy Equipment Alumnus recipient.

Matt's success is our story!

—Matt was featured in the 2007 NCC Viewbook