



Dispatch

MARCH 2006

DAKOTA COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Oberstar Visits DCTC



Congressman James Oberstar visited DCTC's Rosemount campus in January. Oberstar is the ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. While he was on campus, Oberstar was able to visit the site of DCTC's Railroad Conductor Training program, which is the first of its kind in Minnesota.

Fire Truck Donation



In November, Marathon Oil donated the fire truck pictured above to the DCTC Foundation. The fire truck will be used for transportation training at the college.



DAKOTA COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

The DCTC Dispatch is a publication of the president's office. Editor for this publication is Erin Larsen. If you have story ideas or questions, call or write to erin.larsen@dctc.edu or 651.423. 8233.

DCTC is a member of the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities System and an equal opportunity employer/educator.

Grounds for Success.

Senate Higher Education Committee Visit

On January 19, members of the Senate Higher Education Committee paid a visit to DCTC's Rosemount campus.

Senator Sandra Pappas, Senator Claire Robling and Senator David Tomassoni, a number of legislative staffers, DCTC faculty and staff, DCTC students and representatives from MnSCU were among those in attendance.

During the few hours they were on campus, the group was served lunch and given a campus tour. Highlights included a look at the progress of construction as a result of the last bonding bill, a visit to the GM Training Center and an extensive bus ride around the land that DCTC currently rents from the University of Minnesota and wishes to acquire through a bonding bill from the current legislative session.

On the bus tour guided by DCTC transportation instructors, the group was given the opportunity to see a live emergency responder training scenario in which a helicopter landed for a mock patient transfer, a number of driving exercises using school buses, semis and emergency vehicles and got a look at the new DCTC rail yard.

DCTC instructor Mark Grant played a large role in organizing the visit and recognized the importance of the group being able to see the use of this land in action.

"During all facets of the bus tour, it was made clear that DCTC already makes good use of the land for training, but being able to acquire it from the University of Minnesota would allow further development to meet the needs of the transportation industry," said Grant. "We were very grateful that they were able to visit and see for themselves the valuable training that takes place on our campus."



Top: The group boards a bus for a tour of the campus and a look at the land DCTC wishes to acquire.

Bottom: A chopper lands to perform a mock patient transport, giving the group a first-hand look at the kind of training DCTC does.

DCTC Seeks Land Acquisition Funding

DCTC is working to acquire 105 acres of land adjacent to the campus in Rosemount. The funding for the acquisition is a part of the capital bonding request submitted by MnSCU for this legislative session.

The college currently leases the land from the University of Minnesota and uses it largely for transportation programs, including truck driver training, law enforcement training, railroad conductor training, and emergency response training.



DCTC currently rents the land inside the red box from the University of Minnesota and wishes to acquire it through a bonding bill that is being reviewed this legislative session.

The land acquisition would allow DCTC to freely expand and improve training programs to meet the growing needs of the transportation industry.

The legislative bill that would allow for purchase of the land is under HF2637.

Construction Update

Construction on DCTC's campus is moving very quickly. Shaw-Lundquist is the contractor who was awarded the construction bid for the Information Technology Project.

As of the end of March, demolition of the old bookstore, library, first floor west end restrooms and second floor restrooms was underway and the new fire sprinkler system was nearly complete.


Construction will continue to progress through summer and is expected to be completed sometime this fall.



MJSP Awards UHS and DCTC Training Grant


Sixty years ago Universal Hospital Services (UHS) was in the business of renting oxygen tents. Over time, the company expanded to include rental of many types of moveable medical equipment, and today UHS is an industry leader. A new business strategy, based on providing Equipment Lifecycle Services, will reshape the company into one that provides a wide spectrum of services related to moveable medical equipment. This new business strategy and company-wide reorganization required employee training.

To help UHS address these new initiatives, the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership has awarded Dakota County Technical College a \$350,000 grant to provide entry-level training and retraining for 230 UHS managers and supervisors, and employees working in customer service, technical service, asset management, business support, human resources, IT and marketing. In addition, UHS, headquartered in Edina, will contribute \$825,159 to fund the two-year project.

DCTC will offer employee-trainees training in seven areas, including biomedical equipment overview; biomedical technical training; reorganization and restructuring; asset management training; coaching and leadership training; account and service training; and hospital organizations and financial structures. 

All-Minnesota Academic Team

Two DCTC students have earned a place on the All-Minnesota Academic Team. Rebecca Youngmark and Iheanyichukwu "Vincent" Ijioma will be recognized at a luncheon to be held on March 30.

Youngmark is a photography major and Ijioma majors in nanotechnology. Both are members of Phi Theta Kappa and active on campus and in the community. More information will be available in the next Dispatch. Congratulations! 

SUCCESSSES

Student Finds Chess Has Many Roles, Rewards

Student Tetteh Totimeh has made some pretty big moves in his lifetime. In particular, some recent strategic moves earned him first place in the novice section of the 113th Annual Minnesota Open/Warren Sternberg Memorial Chess Tournament.

Totimeh, nicknamed Blue, is a first-year nursing student at DCTC involved with Student Senate and is vice president of the DCTC Chess Club. Born in Liberia and growing up in Africa's Ivory Coast, Totimeh began learning to play chess at age 12 from an instructor at his school. He appreciated the strategy and creativity involved in the game and stuck with it.

"Chess is like a society to me. Each piece has a different role, just as we all have different roles, and any one can make a difference," said Totimeh.

The role of chess in Totimeh's life has been a helpful icebreaker since moving to the United States with his family three years ago, as he finds it an excellent way to meet new people and make friends.

"One thing that keeps me playing the game is getting to meet people, making friends and the creativity and challenges it brings," said Totimeh. As he has studied chess, Totimeh has looked to the strategies of Russian chess grandmaster Garry

Kasparov. He also spends a lot of time playing with family, friends and online, and is very thankful to all those who have given him guidance.

"I would like to thank Dr. Thomas, the DCTC faculty and staff and TRIO for making my college experience at DCTC a great and unique one. Special thanks to our chess club advisor Larry Stone, club president David Waylik, the Student Senate and for all the members of the DCTC Chess Club for taking time to come and play. I hope that our club will continue to grow," said Totimeh.

Also competing in the novice level of the tournament was Jason Wunder, a TESA student and DCTC Chess Club member. Math instructor and DCTC Chess Club advisor Larry Stone and DCTC staff member Steve Helmueller both competed in the sophomore section (USCF rating 1400 or below).



Tetteh 'Blue' Totimeh prepares to make his next move.

Instructor Helps Fuel Automotive Program

Automotive Service Education Program (ASEP) instructor Tim McCluskey recently became the recipient of the General Motors ASEP Instructor Award of Merit – Technical.


General Motors and the International Association of General Motors Automotive Services Educational Programs present the award to an outstanding GM-ASEP technical instructor who has taught at least three consecutive or sequential GM-ASEP courses.



McCluskey received a plaque commemorating the award in November at a national conference held in Tampa, Fla.

"Tim has always done an outstanding job with students and goes beyond the teaching job to both counsel and mentor his students as they work to reach their goals," said Dean of Transportation and Technology Mike Opp.

McCluskey was hired as an Automotive Mechanics instructor in 1989 and became an ASEP instructor in 1996. He has achieved World Class Technician status as a GM instructor, served as a former union chapter president of the college and is a former "Teacher of the Year" nominee.

This is not the first time a DCTC GM ASEP instructor has received recognition. In 1996, DCTC instructor Mark Hickman received a regional award from GM. Hickman is only two certifications away from receiving his World Class Technician status. 

CAMPUS NEWS

DCTC Students Keep Green Industry Growing

With the Minnesota green industry ready to enter its busiest time of year, seven Dakota County Technical College Landscape & Horticulture students are ready to join the industry's ranks after successfully passing the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA) Certified Professional examination.

In order to pass the exam, individuals must achieve a score of at least 800 out of 1000. On March 9, seven DCTC students exceeded the required 800 and one student, Annette Langer, achieved a 920, the highest score of anyone from both the January and March exams.

Students taking the exam were Deanne Rentfrow, Nancy Thorman Dahl, Sonya Peterson, Jessica Bunting, Steve Boruff, Annette Langer and May Riffe.

In total, the two 2006 testing sessions have made 12 DCTC students MNLA Certified Professionals.


According to the MNLA, the Certified Professional examination was developed to 'uphold, improve and promote standards of professionalism and excellence within the industry. By focusing on individuals rather than companies, the program encourages self-improvement among industry professionals.' Once an individual has obtained the certification, they must earn recertification points every three years to maintain their status.



From left: Deanne Rentfrow, Nancy Thorman Dahl, Sonya Peterson, Jessica Bunting, Steve Boruff, Annette Langer, and Mary Riffe.

This year is not the first time that DCTC has seen this sort of success with the examination. In fact, one in every 10 MNLA Certified Professionals in Minnesota have graduated from DCTC's Landscape and Horticulture program.

These contributions are part of the reason why DCTC is looking to make some facility improvements for their program. On April 8, DCTC will be hosting the Green Gala at the Rosemount Community Center to raise funds for a new greenhouse facility. This is important to make sure that DCTC students can continue to be on the cutting edge and get the hands-on education that is so essential to the industry.

"We are really proud of the impact that our students have had on the landscape and horticulture industry in Minnesota and we welcome people to learn more about the program we have at DCTC," said Ed Plaster, Landscape and Horticulture instructor. 

Trip to Florida Prepares Baseball Team for Season

The DCTC baseball team took it on the road to prepare for their upcoming season, playing four doubleheaders March 9-14 in Port Charlotte, Fla.


The Blue Knights were able to split the match-ups with Cuyahoga, New Hampshire, and Fergus Falls and lost both games to Rend Lake. While they didn't walk away from Florida with a winning record, they certainly showed signs of strength - particularly on offense.



Derek Albers came out as a big hitter for the Blue Knights, currently riding on a seven game hitting streak and batting .591 on the season.

Dale Stein, Mike Krejci and Ryan Van Dusen also had solid weeks offensively, batting .471, .381 and .381 respectively. As a whole, the Blue Knights ended the trip south with a .345 batting average. On the mound, Paul Krebs, Brandon Amy and Joe Hickey all picked up their first college wins.


"All in all, we saw some good things this week. I think we have the potential to play very well this year if we continue to work hard," said head coach Tim Huber.

The Blue Knights will begin regular season action March 24 and will continue playing through May. Visit www.goblueknights.com for the latest. 


Mark Your Calendars: Green Gala April 8

The Green Gala is being held April 8 as part of fundraising efforts to construct a new greenhouse facility on the DCTC campus. The current greenhouse is technologically out-of-date and is in constant need of costly repairs. A new, state-of-the-art greenhouse will provide students the best educational opportunities to prepare them for current employment standards.


Serving as emcee for the evening will be Bobby Jensen, senior vice president of Outdoor Environments and co-host of KARE 11's 'Grow With KARE'. The night will include dinner, dancing, silent and live auctions, a cash bar and the highlight, a roast of the DCTC Landscape and Horticulture instructors by Dale Bachman of Bachman's Inc, Peter Moe of the Minnesota Arboretum and DCTC alumni.

Tickets are available for \$75 each or \$500 for a table sponsorships. Community members, alumni and industry professionals are welcome to attend. Silent and live auction donations are welcomed. Tax-deductible contributions can be made to the DCTC Greenhouse Fund. For more information, contact Janet Lekson in the DCTC Foundation office at 651.423.8249. 

Gunderson Elected to Board of Trustees

DCTC Customized Training coordinator and faculty member Scott Gunderson has been elected to serve on the Power Transmission Distributors Association Board of Trustees for 2006. Gunderson has been very involved in bringing an A.A.S. degree in Industrial Distribution to DCTC that is scheduled to begin this summer. 

Exercise & Sport Science B.S. Degree

In August 2006, DCTC will begin offering a completion degree in partnership with Southwest Minnesota State University. Students can start with an A.S. degree in Exercise and Sport Science and stay to complete a B.S. degree in Physical Education with an emphasis in Exercise Science - all on DCTC's main campus in Rosemount. Visit us at www.dctc.edu for more information. 

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DCTC's Torrence Brings Occupational Spanish Training to Business, Industry

Harold Torrence has been receiving a lot of attention from local media recently for developing Occupational Spanish programs through DCTC.

Torrence, originally from Venezuela, has been working for DCTC for about a year as a Customized Training Coordinator. He has been working to help establish a Diversity Institute that provides training for multicultural needs at all levels of business and industry at the college. While working on this project, Torrence realized that he could use his native language to advance the initiative.

Torrence developed the 12-week curriculum by drawing on an existing occupational Spanish manual and his prior experiences developing training for businesses. With customized

training, individuals will not learn grammar or verb conjugation. They simply focus on pronunciation, repetition and role play.



A group of Apple Valley police officers and Lakeville district staff members have been amongst the first to use the training. Feedback so far has been extremely positive due to the reasonable cost, short timeframe and the narrowed focus

of the curriculum to fit the specific needs of the business or industry in question.

In addition to designing Occupational Spanish training, Torrence is also providing Spanish for Travelers and may develop more Spanish programs in the future. For further information, call Harold Torrence at 651.423.8606. 