The 20th Annual Holiday Festival of Trees was held at Lake Area Tech on Friday, November 22, 2019.

To receive the Lake Area Tech friends and family newsletter electronically send your information to:
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The 20th Annual Holiday of Festival of Trees for the 4th year was held on the Lake Area Tech campus. The event hosted nearly 400 attendees who were able to enjoy the holiday transformation of campus, dine on appetizers and bid on prize packages donated/sponsored by many generous contributors. The evening ended with a spectacular fireworks show provided by Lew’s Fireworks. To celebrate our 20th year, the Foundation recognized board member, Mike Luken, as one of the founding members of the Holiday Festival of Trees. Those who attended enjoyed dancing and entertainment with music provided by the local band, Our Therapy. Thank you to all of those that helped us celebrate the 20 year anniversary for the Holiday Festival of Trees.

Mark your calendar for next year’s event which will be Friday, November 20, 2020!
Lake Area Tech Celebrates 55 Years in 2020

Lake Area Tech kicked off a year-long celebration in January as the school marks 55 years of providing post-secondary education in Watertown. Established in January 1965 as South Dakota’s first technical institute, many commemorative events are planned to celebrate the anniversary with students, alumni, current and former staff, and friends of Lake Area Tech.

One of the first happenings planned for the celebration is to begin highlighting Lake Area Tech alumni. Watch for 55 Alumni Highlights throughout the year on our social media channels and website. Lake Area Tech will also celebrate during several public signature events including an open house for the new Prairie Lakes Healthcare Center of Learning, Farm Show booth, the Annual Car Show For a Cause, Boulder Golf Tournament, 4th of July Parade, Feuerstein Series, Holiday Festival of Trees, and more to be determined.

All of the 55th anniversary celebration updates can be found on the Lake Area Tech website at www.lakeareatech.edu. Click on the “Celebrating 55 Years” banner on the homepage to view.

Western Governors University and Lake Area Tech Announce Partnership

To help provide an affordable pathway for students of Lake Area Tech to earn their bachelor’s degrees, Western Governors University (WGU) and Lake Area Tech announced they have entered into a partnership. Under the terms of the agreement, students who have completed an associate degree at Lake Area Tech and are interested in earning a bachelor’s degree in business, IT, K-12 teacher education or health professions – including nursing – will be able to seamlessly transfer their credits to WGU. Additionally, new Lake Area Tech students enrolling in WGU will be eligible to apply for the university’s Community College Partnership Scholarships, valued at up to $2,000 each.

The Community College Partnership Scholarship is open to graduates and staff of Lake Area Tech and will go toward WGU’s already-low flat-rate tuition of about $3,500 per six-month term. Recipients will receive a $500 tuition credit each term, renewable for up to four terms based on satisfactory academic performance.

“The WGU and Lake Area Tech partnership is one more way Lake Area Tech graduates can continue an affordable and attainable future of life-long learning,” said Lake Area Tech President Mike Cartney. “WGU has given Lake Area Tech students a valuable opportunity to work, raise a family and advance their education in a format and at a cost that works for them. We are

Alumni Spotlight: Brendon Steele
BUSINESS ASSOCIATE/MARKETING & MANAGEMENT

Lake Area Tech graduates know that amazing outcomes and successful career paths are theirs for the taking with hard work and a clear vision for an amazing future.

Brendon Steele, of Lake Mills, Iowa, graduated last spring from Lake Area Tech’s Business Associate/Marketing & Management program and hasn’t slowed down since. During his coursework, he learned the importance of a strong social media presence in Tom Mulholland’s Business Relationships class; in particular, on LinkedIn.

“Tom taught us how to develop an effective LinkedIn account and eventually, my LinkedIn profile caught the eye of an Amazon (as in Amazon.com) recruiter who contacted me and asked if I was interested in applying for an internship with them,” Brendon said. After three virtual interviews, he landed his Area Manager internship at an Amazon sortation facility in Wisconsin.

His responsibilities were lofty, but with the skills gained during his training in the Business Associate program, he nailed it. His duties included leading and developing a team of 150+ Amazon associates, tracking all the packaging coming in and out of the sorting facility, staffing each shift to ensure adequate personnel were on hand to handle the volume projections, and ensuring his team had the necessary tools to be successful, all while making sure his team was fulfilling their duties safely and with high quality standards.

Sounds busy, but that wasn’t all. Brendon said he was assigned a summer project to standardize established benchmarks to improve the process of small package deliveries. He was also asked to write a 3,000 word white paper
grateful for the forward thinking and vision that the Governors of the Western states had in developing the WGU.”

Lake Area Tech Agriculture graduate Brianne Wipf is currently pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree in Accounting/Business Management through WGU. “I really appreciate the competency-based learning style WGU offers,” she said. “Staying on track online is easy with the help of my mentor who calls me each week.”

Lake Area Tech Nursing Instructor Alissa Iverson obtained her Master’s Degree through WGU while working and raising her family. She said being able to set her own learning pace was helpful given her busy schedule.

Scholarship Luncheons/Endowments

Each year the Foundation hosts a Fall and Spring Scholarship Luncheon as a way to recognize the outstanding achievements of those recipients and as a way for donors to meet these individuals who have been awarded their scholarships. Lake Area Tech awards nearly 400 Foundation Scholarships annually amounting nearly $400,000. At the 2019 fall luncheon, Jan DeBerg, Executive Director of the Watertown Community Foundation announced a recent endowment through the donation of Ervin & Sybil Schafer to benefit Agriculture Students at Lake Area Tech. This new scholarship fund will award approximately $40,000 annually to multiple students enrolled in agriculture programs. During the 2020 spring luncheon, Jo Vitek spoke to the group about their time, talent and treasures. Jo is the President of Divine Providence of South Dakota, former Chief of Police of Watertown and former Lake Area Tech Law Enforcement Supervisor. In memory of her beloved late husband, the Anthony J. Vitek, Jr. Memorial Scholarship was endowed with a $10,000 gift. Tony’s 25 year law enforcement legacy will continue through this scholarship to students enrolled in the Lake Area Tech Law Enforcement Program.

Thank you Jo for your continued support of scholarships at Lake Area Tech!

detailing his project solutions for major issues within his area and present it to the highest leadership team in his facility.

Seems like a lot for an internship, but Brendon was confident in his abilities to perform to Amazon’s quality standards. He explained that taking care of his team was always his highest priority and the rest fell into place. “My training at Lake Area Tech helped me focus on management and human resources,” he said. “I was always interested in the human resources training I received in school. Lots of time people don’t care about that but people are what’s most important to me and making sure they are taken care of.”

That’s not all. Brendon is an HR Specialist with the South Dakota National Guard’s 147 Field Artillery Unit in Watertown. The leadership and skills acquired while fulfilling his guard duties coupled well with the education he received at Lake Area Tech and the additional proficiencies gained during his time as a Student Ambassador for the Business Associate program.

Those priorities paid off. Just one week after completing his internship, and after careful consideration of his performance, Brendon was offered a full-time position as an Amazon Area Manager in Denver, CO. In his new job, he’ll fulfill the same duties as in his internship, but on a higher scale working with 800 associates, 14 other Area Managers, and senior leadership. He’ll also be reassigned to a National Guard Unit there.

One caveat of his new position is that he had to be in his senior year of a four-college to accept. No problem, he thought. Brendon knew how easy it would be to articulate the 75 credits he earned at Lake Area Tech to Mount Marty College and earn a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration.

“The transition was very smooth between Lake Area Tech and Mount Marty College,” Brendon said. “I recommend Lake Area Tech business students get their four-year degree at Mount Marty. It’s a very good choice for a transfer student.”
1. Medical Assisting students offered free blood pressure screenings for anyone who stopped by their booth in the Student Center in observation of National Medical Assistants Day in October.

2. The Aviation programs’ students and staff hosted the annual Corporate Aviation Day event in December that promotes the aviation maintenance industry as an exciting and rewarding STEM-related field!

3. Thanks to the students and programs who participated in the Pretty in PINK: Style Show for Breast Cancer Awareness Month! Congrats to the Cosmetology Pre-Clinical group who won top honors!

4. More than 300 high school seniors registered to attend our Sr. Tech Day! They visited programs of interest and got a first-hand look at what we’re all about!

5. Each fall, our Ag program faculty and students host “6th Graders at the Farm Day” when local 6th graders tour our Ag demonstration farm and learn about various ag topics.

6. Lake Area Tech welcomed Senator John Thune in October when he toured several programs and visited with faculty and students who showcased the advanced technology our programs offer.

7. We welcomed an awesome group of high school students from across the state and over the border for SCRUBS camp. Students participated in hands-on activities in our healthcare programs and interacted with faculty and students.

8. A record 150 businesses were on hand at our Career Search Expo in October where students connected with business reps and learned about future jobs and internships.

9. Our students once again stepped up to the plate during the annual PACH Food Drive! They exceeded their goal of collecting two tons by 800 pounds – and they topped last year’s record by 1300 pounds! Aviation Maintenance Technology, Business, and Ag were the top three programs bringing in the most food. Hats off to them and all of the programs that participated.
10. Lake Area Tech Foundation’s Scholarship Recognition Luncheon was held in September for our scholarship recipients and their donors. This is a great event for our students to meet their donors and thank them for believing in them and helping them change their lives and launch their careers.

11. President Cartney handed out treats to the Educare kiddos during their annual Halloween trek to the Student Center!

12. More than 300 area high schoolers visited campus for the Big Camp Out in December. Students got a first-hand look at our programs and even had the chance to do some hands-on activities.

13. Our first-ever Weld-Off was held in December with 180 high school participants who learned more about the welding industry and available opportunities while competing for great prizes & possible scholarships! Many thanks to Marmen Energy and A-Ox Welding for co-sponsoring!

14. The 7th annual Energy Tech/Operations Chili Cook-Off event raised $2000 for the local Angel Tree in December. The samples were delicious! Great job students!

15. SDSU representatives visited campus in October for our annual Opening Doors celebration where our students visited with the SDSU reps about the pathway from an Associate’s degree to a Bachelor’s degree.

16. It was a GREAT day for this bunch of Tooth Fairies (Dental Assisting Students) at the Zoo Boo! Our students handed out almost 3000 toothbrushes to kids of all ages and won the award for Most Original Theme, “The One Where the Tooth Fairies Take Over!”

17. A big THANK YOU goes out to Corteva for granting the Lake Area Tech Student Food Pantry $2500!

18. The Mills Construction crew is making great strides on the new Prairie Lakes Healthcare Center of Learning that will open Fall 2020 for Lake Area Tech healthcare programs.
First Ever Weld-Off Competition Exceeds Expectations

Lake Area Tech and the Lake Area Tech Welding Program hosted the first ever Weld-Off competition on campus in December. The event was open to area high school students who entered in one of two categories: novice and advanced. In addition to following a blueprint for the hands-on welding project, the 180 high school students who participated completed a written examination, learned from industry representatives about welding careers, and toured the Lake Area Tech Welding Department.

The event was co-sponsored by Marmen Energy Co. and A-Ox Welding Supply. Representatives from the two companies also were involved in the roundtable discussion, judging the event, and in the awards ceremony. Three winners earned top spots in both categories. The number one place winner in the novice category won a Build Dakota Welding Scholarship as did the top two place winners in the advanced category.

Deemed a success by Lake Area Tech faculty and staff involved in the coordination of the event, plans for an annual Weld-Off event are in the works.

Lake Area Tech Students Gain Exclusive Experience During NASA Internships

Securing internships are program requisites for many Lake Area Tech students, but for a select few, the sky’s the limit – literally. Over the last five years, students in Lake Area Tech’s Electronic Systems Technology, Robotics, and Aviation Maintenance Technology programs have successfully landed competitive internships with NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, at sites across the nation.

This exceptional opportunity requires students to complete a complex application process offered by the South Dakota Space Grant Consortium (SDSG), the link between NASA and South Dakota STEM students. First, Lake Area Tech students apply to the SDSG for internship funding and, if granted, proceed to the NASA multi-step internship application that includes an online class requirement, cover letter, faculty recommendation letter, resume, and transcript. The successful applications are then reviewed by SDSG’s Management Team and by NASA personnel. Together, the scholarship recipients are chosen and notified.

Lake Area Tech Aviation Maintenance student Jacob Pagel, Watertown, SD, was awarded a NASA Armstrong Aircraft Mechanic and Technician Project internship for summer 2019 at the Armstrong Flight Research Center, located at Edwards Airforce Base in southern California. His 10-week internship included hands-on experience performing maintenance repair and integration of flight experiments on support and experimental aircraft.

NASA internships for Electronic Systems Technology and Robotics students also offer hands-on experiences through the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars competition project (NCAS). The five-week scholars program offers students the opportunity to interact with NASA engineers and others as they learn more about careers in science and engineering. While at NASA, students form teams and establish fictional companies interested in Mars exploration. Each team is responsible for developing and testing a prototype rover, forming a company infrastructure, managing a budget, and developing communications and outreach.

Lake Area Tech Robotics/Electronic Systems Technology students who recently completed the 2019 summer NCAS competition projects include Bradley Goff, Kranzburg, SD; and Ethan Benck, Clear Lake, SD; who were located at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, TX; and Joshua Roberts, Watertown, SD; Justin Hildenbrand, Watertown, SD; and Garrett Williams, Arthur, ND; who were located at the Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, OH.
The mikeroweWORKS Foundation has awarded ten scholarships to technical students across the state of South Dakota in an effort to help boost technical education in the state and across the country. Students from Lake Area Tech who received the scholarship are Emily Stewart, Norwich NY – Diesel Technology; Zachary Stoltenburg, Clear Lake SD – Energy Technology; Hallie Tolzin, DeSmet SD – Agriculture; Joel Young, Warner SD – Agriculture; Brandi Boardman, Watertown SD – Welding Technology and Anna Jongeling, Estelline SD – Agriculture.

The Finish Strong Scholarship was open to students entering their second year at one of South Dakota’s four technical institutes to help students earn technical degrees and move into the state’s workforce with less debt. The scholarship program was funded by the mikeroweWORKS Foundation and matched by the state of South Dakota Future Fund for a total of $50,000 in scholarships.

“What Mike Rowe’s foundation has done here in South Dakota to help our technical students is a reflection of the tremendous need we have for skilled workers,” said Dana Dykhouse, chairman of the Finish Strong board. “The impact the mikeroweWORKS Foundation has helped make on students in programs like diesel mechanics, agri-business, energy technology, and more is immeasurable for those individuals and for our state.”

The Finish Strong Scholarship came to life after Rowe’s visit to South Dakota in the fall of 2018, when he visited several South Dakota technical institutes and businesses in support of the New Day in Tech Ed campaign.

The scholarship comes at an important time; skilled workers are in high demand, reflected in the 2.9% overall South Dakota unemployment rate in August 2019, according to the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation.

“Partnerships like the Finish Strong Scholarship are crucial as we work to build the labor force to meet our growing population needs,” said Dennis Daugaard, Finish Strong board member and former South Dakota governor. “We hope teaming up with the mikeroweWORKS Foundation can show students that technical education is a smart path to a very bright future in South Dakota.”

For more information about the Finish Strong Scholarship, visit builddakotascholarships.com/finishstrong.

The Feuerstein Series

RJ Palacio

Our annual Feuerstein Speakers Series hit the 20 year milestone as well. This year, the event featured Wonder author, RJ Palacio. Ms. Palacio spoke of kindness, empathy, understanding, forgiveness and so much more. Her message resonated with the crowd of nearly 400. She also graciously signed books for a long line of attendees after her presentation.

Twenty years ago, Lew Feuerstein, along with family, friends and local business leaders, created the Feuerstein Leadership Series in loving memory of his wife, businesswoman and educator-Dee Feuerstein. Because of Dee’s love for students and business, each year a scholarship is awarded in Dee’s memory to a female student enrolled in the Business Division at Lake Area Tech. The Feuerstein Series enables us to host speakers on campus who invigorate, inspire and ignite a sense of personal growth in all of us as community members.

Alumni Access

NEW GRADUATES:
Login, or username will remain the same – initials + Student ID # (see transcript for ID#). The password will change back to the default password of INITIALS + last 4 digits of your Social Security number. Example: Password for James Bond 123-45-6789 is JB6789. It is recommended to change your password after initial login.

CURRENT ALUMNI:
If you graduated prior to 2017, please contact Don Armstrong at 605-882-5284 or don.armstrong@lakeareatech.edu to receive your username.

Follow this link get started:
https://my.lakeareatech.edu/ics
Come Visit!
Call to schedule your tour today!
605-882-5284
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“Like” the Lake Area Tech Alumni Association page to receive updates from the Alumni Association and Foundation Office.

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• Automotive Gas or Light Duty Diesel Options

AVIATION
• Aviation Maintenance Technology
• Professional Fixed Wing Pilot

BUILDING TRADES TECHNOLOGY

BUSINESS ASSOCIATE
• Entrepreneurship Option
• Human Resource Associate Option
• Marketing & Management Option
• Photography/Media Option

COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS
• Graphic Design & Digital Communications Specialist Option
• Networking & Cyber Security Specialist Option
• Programming Specialist Option

COSMETOLOGY

CUSTOM PAINT & FABRICATION

DENTAL ASSISTING – CERTIFIED

DIESEL TECHNOLOGY
• Ag/Industrial Tractor or Truck Option
• CAT ThinkBIG

CNH Forging the Future

ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY

ENERGY OPERATIONS

ENERGY TECHNOLOGY

ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY

FINANCIAL SERVICES
• Agri-Financial Services Option
• Business Accounting Option
• Consumer Financial Services Option

HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR

HIGH PERFORMANCE ENGINE MACHINING

HUMAN SERVICES TECHNICIAN
• Child Development Option
• Developmental Disabilities Option
• Mental Health Activity Technician Option
• Youth Offender Option

LAW ENFORCEMENT

MED/FIRE RESCUE
• Emergency Medical Specialist Option
• Paramedic Diploma

MEDICAL ASSISTING

MEDICAL LAB TECHNICIAN

NURSING – LPN

NURSING – RN

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

PRECISION MACHINING

ROBOTICS

WELDING TECHNOLOGY

E-Degrees (Online Hybrid Programs)

AGRICULTURE
• Agri-Business Option
• Commodity Merchandising
• Livestock Production & Management Option

BUSINESS ASSOCIATE
• Entrepreneurship Option
• Human Resource Option
• Marketing & Management Option
• Photography/Media Option

COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS

DENTAL ASSISTING – CERTIFIED

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN (CERT. ONLY)

FINANCIAL SERVICES

LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY

MEDICAL LAB TECHNICIAN

PRACTICAL NURSING

PRECISION MACHINING

ROBOTICS

* Indicates these programs are unique to Lake Area Tech in SD.