

A year of extraordinary change



**College celebrates new mission,
new vision, new name**

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2016 was a year of change at Minnesota State College Southeast, as the college became a community and technical college.

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Current student Jeff Godfredson is focusing on college after serving many years in the military.

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from the president

Greetings!

We are grateful for all the support Minnesota State College Southeast in Winona and Red Wing continues to receive from our communities. Our faculty, staff, and administration appreciate everyone's support of our academic programs through advisory committees and contributions of equipment, time, talents, and scholarship funds. As a result of your generosity, we are able to provide the instruction and encouragement our students need to attain their educational goals.



In this issue of *Connections* we are anxious to share with you some of the new and exciting changes at Minnesota State College Southeast that have taken place in the last year. 2016 was an exciting year for the College as we were transformed from a strictly technical college to a comprehensive technical and community college.

There were two primary reasons why we wanted to expand our mission and programming. First, our secondary partners requested that we offer another option to the high school students enrolled in concurrent and Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO). Second, we were able to create a clear pathway for students interested in transferring their credits to four-year institutions.

Our new name is "Minnesota State College Southeast" and our new tag line is "A Technical and Community College." We are as committed as ever to provide quality technical and transfer education!

We are proud to announce that in April 2016, MSC Southeast's Practical Nursing program was accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). We are currently pursuing accreditation for the Associate Degree (Registered) Nursing program.

We continue to focus on our trade and technology programs. Under the direction of Dean of Trade and Technology Travis Thul, we are developing an integrated electronics program in Winona. In Red Wing, we now offer a welding technology certificate and we are in the process of opening a Maker Space Applied Engineering Lab which will be used to offer training for business and industry.

These are exciting times at the College, but again, we could not do this without your support — and we thank you! We will continue to do our best to serve our communities' educational and training needs.

Gratefully yours,

Dr. Dorothy J. Duran
President, Southeast Technical College

New Welding Certificate

Check the local help wanted ads for welding jobs, and you'll see that this is an area of very high demand. That's why Minnesota State College Southeast has expanded its welding program to the Red Wing campus. A one-semester, college-level certificate is now available in the college's newly-renovated welding lab in Red Wing, which is fully equipped with workstations to teach a variety of basic welding processes. The Welding Technology certificate includes hands-on training in stick, MIG and TIG welding as well as lecture coursework in safety, theory, and blueprint reading.

"The welding certificate on the Red Wing campus is an excellent introductory credential for a career in welding. It also offers the potential to transfer into our more rigorous diploma program at our Winona Campus," according to Travis Thul, Dean of Trade and Technology. The first group of students to earn the certificate began college in Spring semester, 2017.



A one-semester, college level certificate is now available on the Red Wing campus.

Practical Nursing Accreditation

MSC Southeast's Practical Nursing program has achieved accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

In a letter dated March 30, 2016, ACEN provided formal notification of the accreditation, which is awarded for a period of five years.

"ACEN Accreditation is the 'gold standard' of Practical Nursing programs," says Dr. Rita Berthelsen, Dean of Nursing and Allied Health. "A degree from an ACEN accredited college can make students more competitive in the job market. Employers prefer to hire accredited practitioners because they are trained under nationally established standards for nursing education."



Minnesota State College Students taking vital signs on the college's simulated patients.

Heavy Duty Donations

Last summer, MSC Southeast was extremely fortunate to receive a donation from Lockheed Martin and the Department of Defense of a CNC machine valued at \$91,000 (new). Truck Driving Instructor Tom Gierok volunteered his time to transport the machine from Lexington, KY, using a truck donated by Lawrence Trucking of Winona. Sean "Mookie" Blass, an Auto Body Collision Technology student, led the re-finishing of all exterior panels and a crew of faculty and students re-assembled the machine under the direction of CNC instructor Paul Sorenson.



Auto Body Collision Technology student Sean "Mookie" Blass led the refinishing of a donated CNC machine.

Lockheed Martin and the DOD came through again in the fall with three brand new brake rotor lathes, valued at \$16,000. Transportation and delivery of this equipment was facilitated by Fastenal — they stopped by and picked the equipment up when one of their semis was returning from a delivery in Kentucky.

In January 2017, Shark Industries of Rockford, MN donated eight pallets of brand new welding equipment worth approximately \$86,000, including welding helmets, grinding wheels, electrodes, and personal protective gear. Truck driving instructor Tom Gierok and welding instructor Casey Mann volunteered their time to take one of the college's 18-wheel trucks to Rockford to pick up the equipment. This donation directly impacts the college's Welding Technology, Industrial Technology, Auto Body Collision Technology, and CNC Machine Tool programs, while also continuing to assist MSCS in growing industrial education programs at both the Winona and Red Wing locations.

Minnesota State

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system — previously known as MnSCU, for short — moved forward with a name and logo change in 2016, re-branding as Minnesota State.

By simplifying its name, Minnesota State hopes to better establish its seven universities and 30 colleges as the most affordable, high quality postsecondary option for Minnesota residents. Serving nearly 400,000 students, Minnesota State is the fourth largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States, with 54 campuses across the state.



MINNESOTA STATE

MSCSA student award

Congratulations go out to Violin Repair Program student (and Guitar Program graduate) Julie Baker, who received a McCormick Leadership Scholarship from the Minnesota State College Student Association at its 10th annual Gala on January 6, 2017.

Julie was one of three students selected to address the audience, and her speech was very warmly received. She said in her address, “I have chosen to be a citizen of my community and not just a resident. That means, I must always ‘pay it forward’ with money, time and my talents. This scholarship has allowed me to get my degree with a little less debt, and to find ways that I can give back to others.”



MSC Southeast President Dr. Dorothy Duran, Julie Baker, Keynote speaker Dr. John O'Brien, and Mike Dean, Executive Director of Minnesota State College Student Association

Tandeski Hub

The Tandeski Center on the Winona campus is the future home of a new human resources center, the Southern Region HR Hub. Minnesota State colleges and universities across the southern part of the state will be served by this office. Shared services are one way that Minnesota State — and MSC Southeast — are managing tight budgets while maintaining high quality service. In September, the Fall Chief Human Resources Officers retreat for the Minnesota State system was held at Tandeski Center.



The Tandeski Center in Winona will soon house the Southern Region HR hub for Minnesota State.

Author, Author!

Congratulations to Learning Resource Center Coordinator Daniel Bernstrom! His widely-acclaimed children’s book, *One Day in the Eucalyptus, Eucalyptus Tree*, was published by Harper Collins in 2016. The book was met with critical praise and delight by young audiences everywhere. As Newbery Honor winner Julius Lester commented, “What fun Daniel Bernstrom has with words! Living as we do in a society where the emphasis is on television, film, and videos, this book shows children how delightful language can be. The wonderful and colorful illustrations add to the playful joy of this book.”



Daniel Bernstrom, MSC Southeast Learning Resource Center Coordinator, and his new book, *One Day in the Eucalyptus, Eucalyptus Tree*.

A year of extraordinary change: We are a community and technical college

New Mission. New Vision. New Name.

2016 was a year of change at Minnesota State College Southeast, as the college transformed itself from a purely technical college to a community and technical college. On June 22, 2016, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees approved the college’s change in mission.

“Today marks a new day in the college’s history. We are now a comprehensive technical and community college,” said Dr. Dorothy Duran, President of Minnesota State College Southeast, marking the announcement of the mission and name. “We look forward to building on our current programming to serve our Red Wing and Winona communities. While technical education will always be at the heart of our mission, adding the Associate of Arts to our offerings broadens our service to the region while strengthening the college as a whole.”

With a change in college’s mission came a need to change its name to reflect its new status as a community and technical college. The college sought input from students, faculty, staff, and the general public in re-naming the college, ultimately arriving at a simplification of the previous name: Minnesota State College Southeast.

“We believe this new name will represent the college well in the future and provide continuity with the past,” commented Dr. Duran. “The college has changed its identity many times since it first opened its doors almost 70 years ago. We hope the new name will serve Minnesota State College Southeast well for the next century or more.”

Better transfer options, pathways to a 4-year degree

The driving motivation for changing the college’s mission was to better serve students who want to transfer credits to other colleges and universities. The new Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences provides a well-rounded general education with a range of coursework in the arts, humanities, mathematics, and sciences. Upon successfully completing the degree, students will be eligible to transfer to any one of the seven Minnesota State universities as college juniors.

“Offering the Associate of Arts degree will better serve the needs of students by increasing access to liberal arts and sciences coursework at the college level and by creating a more seamless transfer process to four-year institutions,” said Dr. Duran.

Jo Poncelet, Dean of Academics, noted that students will be able to save money — and time — by beginning a four-year degree at Minnesota State College Southeast. The cost per credit in 2017 is only \$165.64, far lower than other institutions in the state. (As an example, the base cost per credit at the University of Minnesota is currently \$482.54.)

“The most affordable option is for students to begin college while they’re still in high school under the PSEO program, come to MSC Southeast and finish the Associate of Arts degree, and take that 2-year degree with them to the university,” she said. “Then they will be able to focus on their program major, because they will have already met their liberal arts and science requirements.”

Our New Mission
 Minnesota State College Southeast prepares students for a lifetime of learning by providing education for employment, skill enhancement, retraining, and transfer, to meet the needs of students and the community.

Our New Vision
 Serving individual and regional needs for lifelong learning and career development.



Celebrating Change

Over the summer, new exterior signage was installed on both campuses. The college’s website was updated with the new name and logo. Advertisements, catalogs, and print materials were designed to highlight the college’s new brand and identity. Even the college’s 18-wheel truck trailer was re-designed to showcase the new logo!

Fall celebrations in both Winona and Red Wing brought students, faculty, staff, and the community together. The Red Wing Chamber of Commerce came to campus for a ribbon cutting. Everyone had a chance to autograph huge banners, which are now on display on both campuses.

All around us the theme of “new vision – new mission – new name” brought renewed energy to Minnesota State College Southeast in 2016 — truly a year of extraordinary change.

A reason to celebrate

Transitioning to a technical AND community college was celebrated in Red Wing and Winona as students arrived back for fall semester.

Top: Dr. Dorothy Duran signed the “new vision, new mission, new name” commemorative banner.

Middle: Students, faculty, staff and friends walked in the River City Days parade.

Bottom: The Red Wing campus and Red Wing Area Chamber of Commerce held an official ribbon cutting ceremony.



Jeff Godfredson:

A lifetime of military service around the world leads to Minnesota State College Southeast

It's a Wednesday morning, and Terry Greene is teaching an applied sales course. His students are attentive as he explains how to turn a business contact into a prospective sale. "People do not buy features. They do not buy advantages. They buy benefits," he says.

One student who is clearly benefitting from the class is Jeffrey Godfredson. He's a "non-traditional" adult student, having come back to college following a 20-year military career. A decorated veteran, he enlisted in the Marines in 1986 at the age of 18 and gained a lifetime of experiences around the world. At last count he's visited 27 different countries!

The Marines are forward deployed in both battle and humanitarian service. Jeff was a witness to history first-hand when Noriega was extradited from Panama. He was part of the relief efforts following the 1989 typhoon in Thailand and the Philippines. He served in Operation Restore Hope, bringing aid to famine-stricken Somalia. During the buildup to Operation Desert Storm, his unit was doing mine sweeping operations in the Persian Gulf.

Having faced situations like these, it may be surprising to learn the Jeff was a bit intimidated by coming back to college. But he says, "I had the fear of the unknown. I knew nothing about


going to school at all. I had no idea what the reception would be. But wow, I have been totally impressed with the staff and the students!"

As a Marine Combat Instructor, much of Jeff's military career was in teaching marksmanship, so he smiles when he says, "It's funny that I am the one who is a student now, because when I was in the military it seemed like all I did was teach!" He points out that in the Marine Corps everyone must qualify as a basic rifleman. "Everyone goes through boot camp and marine combat training, regardless of what their role is in the force."

Victories and challenges

Having previously served in the Persian Gulf, Jeff found himself in the region once again in August 2004, when the Marines were deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Jeff played a part in a famous battle in An Najaf against insurgent followers of the Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. For three weeks, the Marines fought against al-Sadr's militia, often battling them through congested city streets and the tombs of the world's largest cemetery, Wadi Al-Salaam.

As an Infantry Platoon Sargent, Jeff had 53 service members and eight vehicles under his charge. Though they successfully

A photograph showing two men in a classroom. One man, Jeff Godfredson, is standing and leaning on a wooden podium, wearing a maroon jacket and blue jeans. The other man, Terry Greene, is sitting at a desk, wearing a striped shirt and blue jeans, gesturing with his hands as if in conversation. The room has several rows of desks and chairs, and a framed picture on the wall.

Jeff Godfredson discusses the day's lecture with instructor Terry Greene. His career focus has shifted toward business, sales and marketing as he works toward his degree.



After spending many years in the military, all over the world, student Jeff Godfredson is now focusing on college ‘to provide better future for my wife and myself.’

rooted out 3,000 insurgents, Jeff was injured in an attack when his vehicle was hit by an IED. Nonetheless, he stayed in country and continued onward with his unit into Fallujah.

Several months later the Marines made their way back to An Najaf, where they again witnessed history as they provided security for Iraq’s first free elections. “We got to see a different side of Iraq. Stateside organizations would send clothing and things the kids wanted, like soccer balls, and we helped distribute them. We worked with contractors on projects and helped rebuild schools.”

Success in college

Returning to the States, Jeff retired after 20 years of military service and moved back to the Midwest. Unfortunately, he came to realize that he had suffered a traumatic brain injury from the IED attack. More and more he experienced headaches, dizziness, and short-term memory loss. He struggled to correctly process words and numbers.

Through the Veterans Administration, he worked with a speech therapist for a full year. “At one point I couldn’t repeat

a sequence of three numbers back to my therapist. It was incredibly frustrating. Being able to repeat five numbers in a row was a huge breakthrough.”

The Veterans Administration also helped him realize his dream of going to college and getting a degree. “I would recommend that anyone who has served in the military meet with their state VA representative and get screened to see what kinds of educational benefits and scholarships are available,” Jeff suggests. “I had no idea that I was still eligible to receive benefits. My daughter was able to go to school on my benefits as well. It’s definitely worth looking into it.”

Jeff enrolled at Minnesota State College Southeast in the Individualized Studies program. Despite his range of life experiences and maturity, becoming a full time student wasn’t easy. “My first semester was kind of rough, going to school all day here, and doing homework most of the nights. I consider going to college just like a full-time job.”

Nowadays, Jeff says he loves being in the classroom. “I really like the interaction. In a history class with Chris Stout, or Spanish

CONTINUED →

culture with Lynne Rabuse, my personal history in traveling around the world and living in places like Iraq informs what I can contribute.”

Jeff is the Winona campus Student Senate Vice President, and one of his duties is maintaining the Veterans Lounge. He makes sure it's stocked with coffee, soda, juice, chips, snacks, and the civilian equivalent of meals-ready-to-eat: Hot Pockets and Cup Noodles. “We have a TV, a computer, a printer, some basic school supplies. It's a place to get away from the rest of the school and have time on your own or connect with other vets.”

Chris Stout has high words of praise for his student. “After having him in class, I cannot think of a student on this campus who better represents what we want from our students as scholars, as classmates, and as citizens than Jeffrey.”



Jeff pictured in 2004 during the Battle of An Najaf in Iraq.

“When I first came to Southeast, I started in individualized studies because I didn't know exactly what I would want to be doing,” Jeff recalls. “Since then I began thinking about starting my own business or working in sales, so I have been taking a lot of classes from Terry Greene. Now my career focus is in business, sales, and marketing, and that could open up a lot of doors for me.”

As Jeff works toward finishing his degree, the bottom line is clear. He states, “I am here to make myself a better person, and provide a better future for my wife and myself.”

Along the way, through his service to others and enthusiasm for education, he is making Minnesota State College Southeast a better place.

MSC Southeast: A Military Friendly College

Veterans Resources

Minnesota State College Southeast is proud to have been named an official Military-Friendly College. The college has also been named a Hiawatha Valley Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Company. Both designations reflect the college's commitment to serving the needs of our veterans and armed forces service members.

Veterans Benefits

Many veterans entering college are not aware of which state and federal benefits they are entitled to, or how to begin receiving them. Ask our Veterans Resources Staff to help you determine which benefits are available.

Benefits can include (but are not limited to):

- Education assistance
- Surviving spouse/dependent education benefits
- Minnesota GI Bill
- State tuition reimbursement
- Federal tuition assistance
- Credit for prior learning/experience
- Contacts at other agencies ready to help veterans in any situation such as:
 - Rent/mortgage assistance
 - Legal assistance
 - Disability claims with the VA
 - Internships/mentorships
 - Emergency grants
 - And much more...

Contact:

Pamela Zimmerman, MSC Southeast Veterans Representative
pzimmerman@southeastmn.edu, 507-453-2710

Mark Larsen, Southeast Regional Coordinator,
MN Department of Veterans Affairs
mark.larsen@state.mn.us, 507-779-9375 (cell)



Frozen eyelashes and fur coats

Distance learning student Rebecca Moore visits the coldest city and coldest village on Earth

Rebecca Moore is studying Computer Aided Design (CAD) Drafting Technologies at MSC Southeast. Originally from North Carolina, she currently lives in Moscow, where she works for a Department of State contractor at the U.S. Embassy.

Why did you decide to visit the coldest city in the world?

In January, I read an article about how this place in Russia was currently -46F. I guess I like a challenge; I said, "That's the place for me!" Immediately I started looking into how to visit the world's coldest inhabited city, Yakutsk, and coldest village, Oymyakon, which holds the world record low of -96F.

Tell us about Yakutsk and Oymyakon.

When I flew from Moscow and landed in Yakutsk, it was -38F. When I left Oymyakon, it was -48F. In Yakutsk, you can see places where steam has built up on everything and it looks like snow. In the markets, frozen fish and meat are displayed outdoors in wooden boxes. No freezer needed!

The people there wear a lot of fur. Even in Yakutsk, which is a large city and the capital of the Sakha Republic, most people wear reindeer skin boots. There isn't a lot of wind, which helps immensely, but still, my face, fingers and toes were always cold.

The trip from Yakutsk to Oymyakon takes 20-24 hours. When you stop for a break, you have to leave the car running. At night, we put the car in a heated garage. Truck drivers just leave their trucks running 24/7 for weeks at a time.



Rebecca used her phone to snap this photo of women waiting for a bus in Yakutsk. She says: "My phone worked for about 3-5 minutes at a time before completely shutting down from the extreme temperatures. Then I would have to warm it up before it would work again!"

A lot of the driving was on rivers, using them like a road. There are no bridges to some of the places we visited, so you can only get to them when the rivers freeze over. In November, the local government goes out to the major river near Yakutsk, clears a road, and puts out road signs. On the river!

How did you find out about MSC Southeast and why did you choose our CAD drafting program?

I have an undergraduate degree in International Business and a graduate certificate in Project Management. I wanted to become more qualified for contract jobs around the world. I was familiar with AutoCad from high school, so I cast about the internet looking for CAD degrees online, and that's how I found MSC Southeast. I wasn't looking for SolidWorks classes (truth be told, I didn't even know what it was), but now that I'm studying that as well, I love it!

See the full length interview and link to a Facebook photo gallery of Rebecca's travels on the MSC Southeast website: www.southeastmn.edu/Connect17



OUTSTANDING ALUMNI

Outstanding Alumni

Every year, the Minnesota State College Southeast Alumni Association recognizes alumni from each campus who have accomplished noteworthy achievements in their careers or have made significant contributions to their communities and MSC Southeast.

Congratulations to the 2016 Outstanding Alumni Award recipients, Ryan Kilbride and Jeremy Miller.

Red Wing: Ryan Kilbride graduated in May 2009 with an Associate in Applied Science degree in Accounting, earning a 3.72 GPA. He started his own business, Kilbride Tax LLC, in 2007. He then worked in accounting at Stencil Cutting and Supply in Red Wing and Consolidated Precision Products in Bloomington. He is now a Tax and Business Manager at Haworth & Co. Ltd in West St. Paul, where he supervises a staff of five.

Winona: Jeremy Miller earned an Associate in Applied Science degree in Accounting in 2004 from the Winona campus. He is Chief Financial Officer for Wm. Miller Scrap Iron & Metal Co. Jeremy is also serving his second term as a member of the

Nominate an Outstanding Alum!
Submit your application online:
www.southeastmn.edu/alumni



**2016 Outstanding Alum
Ryan Kilbride, Red Wing Campus
Accounting (2009)**



**2016 Outstanding Alum
Jeremy Miller, Winona Campus
Accounting (2004)**

Minnesota Senate. As the representative for Minnesota's 28th District, Jeremy has fought for higher education funding and bonding bills that support capital projects in our community.

2017 Outstanding Alumni Awards — Nominations Open

Nominations are now being sought for the 2017 Outstanding Alumni Awards! Do you know someone who graduated from MSC Southeast at least five years ago and has made a significant contribution to the community and the college? Please contact Casie Johnson for information about making a nomination: cjohnson@southeastmn.edu or 507-453-2663.

FOUNDATION EVENTS

Annual Golf Tournaments Raise Funds for Scholarships

Each year the Minnesota College Southeast Foundation hosts a tournament in each of our campus communities. The tournaments are a great day to come together and support our students by investing in their future through raised scholarship funds.

Over 200 golfers participated in our 2016 golf tournaments!

\$31,000 combined tournament revenue

154 scholarships

In 2016, students were awarded scholarships totaling \$135,400.



2017 GOLF TOURNAMENTS - SAVE THE DATES:

RED WING: Thursday, May 25, 2017 | WINONA: Monday, August 7, 2017

Giving to the Minnesota State College Southeast Foundation



Thanks to the support of alumni, friends, and businesses, the MSC Southeast Foundation helps ease the burden for Southeast students. The Foundation is a 501 c(3) organization governed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors.

The success of MSC Southeast and its students would not be possible without the generosity of our donors. Gifts are used to support college initiatives, to enhance education and to provide scholarship support for MSC Southeast students.

Gifts to the Foundation may be made for general support, and will be used where they are most needed. They may also be designated for a particular program or made in honor or memory of an individual.

Ways to make a gift

We encourage you to make a gift in a way that is the most advantageous for you.

- Pledge: You may pledge an amount to be paid over a period of time.
- Gifts of appreciated property: You can realize significant tax advantages by making a gift of appreciated securities.
- Philanthropy on a Budget Direct Debit Program: Make a recurring gift through direct debit from your checking or savings account.
- Planned gifts
 - Bequests
 - Life insurance
 - Giving through retirement plans
 - Charitable trusts and annuities: You can enjoy the benefits of a current tax deduction while providing for yourself or loved ones, and making a significant gift to the college.



For assistance in giving to MSC Southeast, call 507-453-2663 or email cjohnson@southeastmn.edu.

www.southeastmn.edu/donate

Minnesota State College Southeast Foundation Board

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Don & Donna Peterson: Investing in the Future

Don and Donna Peterson are the owners of Mississippi Welders Supply (MWS) and long-time supporters of Minnesota State College Southeast Foundation. MWS is a valued partner of the college's welding program and has been especially helpful in re-establishing the welding certificate option on the Red Wing campus. The Petersons recently established an endowed scholarship fund which will yield benefits to future students for many years to come. We met up with the Petersons in February to get their perspective on technical education in our community.

When did you get involved in the welding field?

Don: I studied engineering at the University of Minnesota and worked for the Highway Department and Honeywell before serving in the Navy. In 1961, I went to work for AIRCO (Air Reduction Company), which sold compressed industrial gases and welding equipment. AIRCO was a leader in the field and developed welding processes that are the industry standard today, such as MIG and TIG welding. They liked my background in naval electronics, but they sent me to night classes in welding at Dunwoody Institute in Minneapolis for two years.

What brought you to Winona?

Don: I got interested in owning my own company and bought Mississippi Welders Supply in 1973, and we moved from Detroit, Michigan to Winona. At that time Winona Area Technical Institute (now MSC Southeast) didn't teach the more advanced welding processes, so I set up 10-session night classes for TIG and MIG at the college myself!

Our business has steadily grown, and now our children are involved in running it. We have 11 stores throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa and employ more than 175 people. We have provided internship opportunities for MSC Southeast students and have hired graduates from a variety of the college's programs.

How does technical education benefit students?

Donna: If a four-year college is not your thing, you can get a short course in welding that can get you a good job right away. You don't have to have a liberal arts degree to get a good job. We need people in the trades too! And for some students, if they succeed in a trade program, they are more likely to be successful in all of their college classes, including academics.

Why did you set up an endowed scholarship fund with Minnesota State College Southeast Foundation?

Donna: Let's face it, going to college costs money! If you are struggling to pay your ordinary bills, where are you going to get the extra money to pay for the classes that you need? You know you need more training, but as they say, the kids need new shoes. Getting a scholarship gives you a boost when you need a little help, a little support.

Don: We think it's a way of helping the students who may become our employees in future years. After all, we spend money to send employees to training sessions. It just makes sense to train the workforce — we are investing in the future.



College sweethearts Don and Donna Peterson got married in 1958 and by coincidence, this year they have been married for 58 years!



Ryan Welch, class of 2012

Inset: Ryan did a custom finish for J'anna Jacoby, who plays a Weber "Red River" mandolin on stage with Rod Stewart.



Guitar program grad applies the finishing touch to top-of-the-line musical instruments

Ryan Welch is the finish manager for Earth Elements Design Center in Bozeman, Montana, a company that builds and finishes fine cabinetry. He has worked for two of the top boutique instrument companies in the world: Santa Cruz Guitar Company and Weber Mandolins. He maintains his close association with Bruce Weber Sr. at Montana Lutherie and continues to do instrument repair and finish work in Montana. Here is Ryan's story in his own words.

I grew up in Michigan, and when I was in high school, the recession hit really hard. People were out of work and dropping out of school. I moved to Red Wing for both years of guitar repair and building at MSC Southeast in 2011 and 2012. After Red Wing, I did the Wood Finishing program at Dakota County Technical College.

Every state I have ever wanted to live in, I have found a job, and that's because of Red Wing. I wanted to live in the Carolinas, so after I finished school, I started working in repair and antique restoration in North Carolina. I didn't love the heat and humidity, so I was happy when I lucked out and got to go work for Santa Cruz Guitars in California. The founder, Richard Hoover, was top notch to work for.

When you start out in the field, you have a fear of lutherie. It took me nine months to build my archtop in college and I was

terrified of doing something to ruin it. Working at a place like Santa Cruz gets you over that fear. You are dealing with some of the most valuable and rare tonewoods in the world, and you build up the confidence that you can do it.

I left Santa Cruz to become the lead finisher at Weber Mandolins in Bend, OR. Bruce Weber taught me how to run a high-end production shop. We built custom instruments for musicians playing in bands with Carrie Underwood, Luke Bryan, Rod Stewart, Santana and others. It's pretty cool to see an instrument you finished on a TV show like the Grammys!

Musicians would come in or call with very specific requirements. One player wanted a mandolin that would color-match a brick! We might complete an instrument and ship it direct to Madison Square Garden for a gig. I did a beautiful finish in red for J'anna Jacoby, who plays fiddle and mandolin on tour with Rod Stewart. That color became part of our standard line, "Red River."

I'm 26 and the recession made me grow up really quick, but I have been able to make a living. I wake up every day and I'm so grateful for where I am. Right now I'm looking out my office window at the Rocky Mountains. For a kid who grew up 40 miles outside of Detroit, that's not too bad.

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